

# THE BROTHER OF THE PROPHET MOHAMMAD

(The Imam Ali)

*An Extensive Research  
of the Shi-ite Islamic School of Thought*

VOL. I

by

**Mohamad Jawad Chirri**

Exponent of the Shi-ite Islamic School in America



**THE BROTHER  
OF THE PROPHET  
MOHAMMAD  
(The Imam Ali)**



**Imam Mohamad Jawad Chirri**

THE BROTHER  
OF THE PROPHET  
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(The Imam Ali)

A reconstruction of Islamic history and an extensive  
research of the Shi-ite Islamic school of thought.

VOLUME I

by

Mohamad Jawad Chirri  
Director of the Islamic Center of Detroit

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**ONLY UNUSUALLY NOBLE, SPIRITED MEN, AS THOSE LISTED ABOVE, WOULD ACHIEVE WHAT NORMALLY TAKES A WHOLE COMMUNITY TO ACCOMPLISH.**





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## About the Author

Imam Mohamad Jawad Chirri is a native of Lebanon and a graduate of the distinguished religious institute of Najaf in Iraq. He is an Islamic theologian, lecturer, historian and author. He is the host of a weekly radio program called "Islam In Focus," broadcast by WNIC. From his published books are:

Moslem Practice

Islamic Teaching

Imam Hussein, Leader of the Martyrs

Inquiries About Islam (Thousands of American libraries acquired this book.)

"Al-Khilafatu Fi Al-Dustour Al-Islami" (The Caliphate in The Islamic Constitution-Arabic.)

"Ameer Al-Munineen" (The Leader of Believers-Arabic.)

Imam Chirri was invited by the Detroit Muslim Community to be their spiritual leader. He was instrumental in constructing the Islamic Center of Detroit, one of the largest Islamic institutes in North America. He is currently the Director of this Center.

Imam Chirri's work was extended to West Africa. While on a lecture tour in 1958, he was able to induce the Lebanese community in Sierra Leone to build a children's hospital as a present to the natives of that country.

During a visit to the Middle East in 1959, the author dealt with an old Islamic problem and succeeded in finding its solution. For over a thousand years, the Muslims were divided into Sunnites and Shi-ites (neither of the two sides was recognizing the soundness of the teachings of the

other), in spite of the agreement of both Schools on all the teaching of the Holy Qur'an and the authentically reported hadiths of the Holy Prophet Mohammad.

The author met the late Sheikh Al-Azhar, Sheikh Mahmood Shaltut, on July 1, 1959. He discussed with him the important issue. At the conclusion of the discussion, Sheikh Shaltut acknowledged the soundness of the Islamic Shi-ite Jaafari School. The author requested him to declare equality between the Shi-ite Jaafari and Sunnite Schools. The Declaration was broadcast and published on July 7, 1979. This Declaration was historical and the first of its kind since the separation of the two Schools.

The spirit of true Islamic brotherhood can prevail only by mutual understanding among the various Islamic Schools. It is with this in mind that the author presents this book, *The Brother of the Prophet Mohammad*. Needless to say that the arguments among various Islamic Schools revolve mainly around the history of this great Imam. A true understanding of his position in Islam is bound to lead the Muslims to a more genuine brotherhood.

## Introduction

Americans who know Islam and Muslims are relatively few, and those who know the plurality of the Islamic Schools of Thought and that there are among the Muslims Sunnites and Shi-ites are fewer.

However, the events of the Iranian Revolution which took place in 1978-79, put the news of the Muslims in general and the Shi-ite Muslims in particular on the front pages of the Western and Eastern press. This is because the Shi-ite Muslims are the absolute majority among the Muslims in Iran. The American press spoke of the Shi-ites briefly, and many times inaccurately. This reconfirmed my conviction for the need of an English book dealing with the Islamic Shi-ite School with some details based on serious research.

Since this is the School of the Imam Ali, Son of Abu Talib, it would be appropriate to study this great Imam and his political-religious history. For this is the only means through which we can understand the foundation of this school.

To satisfy this need, I wrote this book and called it *The Brother of the Prophet Mohammad*. This is a title which was given to Imam Ali uniquely by the Holy Prophet Mohammad, who "brothered" him from among all the Muslims. He never chose for himself any other man as a brother.

The title was the dearest to the heart of the Imam; for when he introduced himself publicly, he used to mention his brotherhood to the Prophet after mentioning his servitude to the Almighty. And it was pleasing to the Holy Prophet to call Ali "My brother."

The Muslims agree that Imam Ali had what no other person from among the Muslims had of distinctions. He is from among them the only person who was raised by the Messenger of God since the days of his childhood. He was brought up by him according to his ethical standards; then he chose him from among all men to be his brother.

The Muslim scholars, Sunnites and Shi-ites, agree that Ali was the most knowledgeable in the Book of God (the Qur'an) and the teachings of His Prophet among all the companions. He was the richest source of wisdom and the most eloquent speaker, the greatest defender of the faith, the firmest in maintaining justice and the most selfless endeavorer in the way of God. These qualities are the Islamic criteria of distinctions, for the Holy Qur'an announces that God prefers the endeavors in His way to the inactive; that those who know and those who do not know are not equal, and it announces that the noblest among people in the sight of God are their most righteous.

This makes it very clear that the Sunnites and the Shi-ites do not only agree on all Islamic principles stated in the Holy Qur'an or in the authentic hadiths of the Holy Prophet Mohammad but also agree on the religious and the scholarly place of the Imam Ali in Islam. Therefore, when the Sunnites and Shi-ites differ, they do so only politically; for they differ on the political-religious aspects rather than the Imam Ali's religious and scholarly place in Islam.

While they agree that Ali was a righteous Caliph who came to power through a popular election, they disagree on whether he was, in addition to this, a Caliph by the Prophet's selection. Those who do not believe that the Prophet appointed Ali as his successor think that the theory of the Prophet's selection of the Imam Ali is a theory of inheritance of rule through blood relationship. Those who believe that the Prophet selected the Imam as his successor say that the belief in the selection of the Imam Ali by the Prophet is the opposite of the belief in the inheritance of rule.

The Muslims also disagree on his political-religious role in the history of Islam as a statesman. While they agree on his adherence to the principle of absolute justice and his

firmness in enforcement of the Islamic law in spirit and letter, they disagree on the wisdom of such an inflexible attitude.

There is another important matter pertaining to his political-religious place in the Islamic history, namely; his role in founding the Islamic State. This aspect was not mentioned clearly nor was it a subject of a serious discussion among the historians and scholars of history.

Since the Muslims agree on the religious-scholarly place of the Imam, it would be superfluous to discuss those aspects of the Imam's life.

This book, therefore, does not review the history of the Imam in details, nor does it speak of his knowledge, his eloquence or his wisdom. Nor does it discuss his piety and immaterialistic attitude, nor does it speak of his unusual performance. Its discussion centers on the political-religious place of the Imam in Islam, his spiritual relationship to the Prophet Mohammad, and his contribution in establishing the Islamic State and the spread of the Faith of Islam.

It discusses him as a Caliph and as a statesman. It discusses, also, what was said about his policy and statesmanship and the causes which led to the accumulations of the difficulties which prevented him from reaching a peaceful and more lasting rule during the days of his caliphate.

Finally, the book discusses the caliphate as a religious-political system and the kind of caliphate which is consonant with the nature of the Islamic message. Therefore, this book contains the following parts:

1. The Imam during the era of the Prophethood.
2. The Imam in the era of the Three Caliphs.
3. The Imam in his own era.
4. The Caliphate in the Islamic Law, and the conclusion of the discussion.

I have endeavored to discover the relationship between the historical events which involved the life of the Imam and which took place during the fifty-three years since the commencement of the Prophethood to the end of the righteous Caliphate.

The reader may find that those events were connected

with each other through strong ties. Thus, they formed a chain of causes and effects, the subsequent among them was the outcome of its precedent.

In narrating the events of that period, I did not rely on only the sources from the respected books of history, but I tried to add to that, whenever it was possible, what I found in the Authentics and other reliable books of hadith which recorded those events. This is because many Muslim scholars rely upon hadiths more than they rely upon books of history, especially when the hadiths are recorded in the known Authentics and the rest of the reliable books.

I did not try to discuss the Imam as a man whose special relationship with his Lord distinguished him and enabled him to perform miracles and bring unusual events. I rather tried to discuss him as a man who is subject to rules of nature, time and place who tried his utmost to serve sacred principles and tried to live by those principles and for those principles.

I hope that this book will contribute to better understanding and stronger brotherhood among the Muslims. Certainly the personality of the Imam and his history are inspiring, and if the Muslims are ready to receive that inspiration, it will lead them to unity.

What would be written of truth about the personality of a man who was chosen by the Prophet to be his brother, would certainly be a potential for strengthening the spirit of brotherhood and love among all Muslims.

—*Mohamad Jawad Chirri*



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**PART I**

**THE IMAM  
DURING THE ERA  
OF THE PROPHETHOOD**



1.

## The House of the Prophet Mohammad

All Muslims glorify the Members of the House of the Holy Prophet Mohammad who are called *Aal Mohammad* or *Ahl Beit Mohammad*. This attitude is in accord with the instructions of the Holy Prophet who commanded Muslims to pray simultaneously for the members of his House whenever they pray for him. By so commanding them, he actually required the Muslims to reserve a place for them next to his. The Holy Qur'an made it mandatory to offer prayers for Mohammad and to greet him:

“Certainly, God and His Angels honor the Prophet (Mohammad).

O believers, pray (God to honor) him and greet him repeatedly.”<sup>1</sup>

Many companions asked the Prophet to teach them how to comply with this command. Many highly respected hadith-recorders (including Al-Bukhari and Muslim) reported in their “Sahihs” (authentics) that Kaab Ibn Ujrah stated that the Prophet said:

“Say: God, bestow honor on Mohammad and the members of the House of Mohammad, as Thou bestowed honor on the members of the House of Abraham, Thou Art praised and Glorious. God bless Mohammad and the members of the House of Mohammad as Thou had

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1. The Holy Qur'an, Chapters 33, 57.

blessed the members of the House of Abraham. Certainly Thou Art Praised and Glorious.”<sup>2</sup>

When instructing his followers on a religious matter, the Messenger of God did not speak out of his human desire. The Qur’an testifies that he only said what was revealed to him.:

“Nor does he (Mohammad) say (aught about religion) of (his own) desire. It is not but a revelation sent to him.”<sup>3</sup>

### IS THE HONOR DUE TO THE RELATIONSHIP?

It may appear that inclusion of the members of the House of Mohammad in prayers for him is due to their blood-relationship. If so, it would not be in accord with the spirit of the Islamic teachings. To bestow on them such a unique honor because of their relationship to Mohammad is to advocate a family supremacy and is in conflict with the following principles:

1. All people in the eyes of God are equal, for the Holy Qur’an declared:

“Surely, the noblest among you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you.”<sup>4</sup>

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2. Of these hadith-recorders are the following:

- A. Al-Bukhari, “Sahih Al-Bukhari” (Authentic of Al-Bukhari), Part 6, p. 101 (in the Book of the interpretation of the Holy Qur’an).
- B. Muslim, Sahih Muslim, Part 4, (in the Prayer on the Prophet after the declaration of the Faith) p. 136.
- C. Mohammad Ibn Majah, Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 1, hadith No. 904.
- D. Al-Termathi, hadith No. 483, Part No. 1. Other hadiths are reported by Abu-Sa-eed, Abu Mas-ood, Talhah and Ibn Mas-ood. All Accord with the above-mentioned hadith of Kaab Ibn Ujrah.

3. Chapter 53, verse 4-5.

4. The Holy Qur’an, Chapter 49, verse 13.



2. God does not penalize or reward a servant of His for the sins or good deeds of his parents or his close or distant relatives. From the Holy Qur'an:

“And beware a day on which no parent avails his child; nor will a child avail his parent.”<sup>5</sup>

3. God does not penalize nor reward a human being for what is beyond his ability and without his choice.

Being related or unrelated to the Prophet is not a matter of personal choice. None of us chose before our birth to be related or unrelated to a particular family, nationality or race.

Therefore, it would be very difficult for Muslims to believe that they should include Mohammad's relatives in their prayers simply because they are his relatives.

*It Is Due to Their Merits,  
Not Their Inheritance*

To dispel this apparent conflict, it is important to know that the word, “Aal Mohammad,” which is repeatedly mentioned in the daily prayers, does not include all his relatives. Only a very small number of them are included. Had they all been included, it would be a clannish or a tribal discrimination because many of them did not walk in the path of Mohammad, and to place them above others is to advocate a clannish supremacy.

Kinship to the Prophet Mohammad does not mean acceptance by God; nor does it secure for his relatives a place in Paradise or insure them against Divine punishment. God, according to Islamic teachings, has created Paradise for whoever obeys Him and the place of punishment for whoever disobeys Him, regardless of family affiliation, nationality, or race. The Holy Qur'an even contains a chapter defaming Abu Lahab who was an uncle of the Prophet Mohammad.

“Perish the two hands of the Father of Flame and per-

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5. The Qur'an, Chapter 31, verse 33.

ished he. His wealth and whatever he gained did not avail him. . . .”<sup>6</sup>

The truth is that the word Aal Mohammad means only the “chosen” relatives of Mohammad. These chosen individuals are not chosen nor honored because of their relationship to Mohammad, but because of their virtues. They lived the true Islamic life, followed the instructions of the Holy Qur’an and the Messenger, and never parted with them in word or deed. *When God informs us in His Book that the noblest among His human creatures are the most righteous, and His Messenger commands us to honor the members of his house when we honor him, we infer that they are the most righteous after the Prophet.*

Had they not been so, they would not deserve such a unique honor, and the Prophet would not have instructed us to honor them whenever we honor his name. To do otherwise would not be in accord with the Holy Qur’an. *Thus, by commanding us to pray for them whenever we pray for him, the Prophet was actually informing us of their high merit, being the most obedient to God and His Messenger.*

## THE RECORD ATTESTS TO THEIR MERIT

All Muslims agree that Ali, the Prophet’s cousin whom the Prophet “brothered” and his wife Fatimah (the Lady of Light), the dearest child of the Messenger, and their two children, Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein, are from the chosen members of the House of Mohammad and that they are included in our prayers for him. The high qualifications of the chosen relatives of Mohammad is the main reason for the very unique honor bestowed upon them.

Imam Ali stood above all others, after the Prophet. He was the strongest supporter of the Messenger of God. He never hesitated to give his life for the promotion of Islam. The readers of history can easily know that Imam Ali was the top defender of Islam and the most adherent to its rules.

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6. The Holy Qur’an, Chapter 111.

Imam Ali's attitude towards personal power and prestige was unique. Whenever he had to choose between adherence to his ideals and the pleasures of the earthly life, he unhesitatingly chose the former. History testifies that he preferred to lose the leadership of the Muslim World rather than to accept a condition in which he did not believe. He was offered this leadership contingent on his pledge to follow the Book of God, the instructions of the Messenger, and the traditions of the first two Caliphs in the absence of the Quranic and the Messenger's instructions. He replied:

“(I shall follow the Book of God and the instructions of His Messenger; and in the absence of specific teachings of the two sources,) I shall endeavor to the best of my knowledge and ability.”<sup>7</sup>

His knowledge was amazing in its depth and extensiveness. His sermons, lectures, and the words contained in Nahjul-Balaghah (Path of Eloquence) testify to the authenticity of the reported statement of the Messenger:

“I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is its gate; so, whoever wants to enter the city should come through the gate.”<sup>8</sup>

The record of the other three distinguished members of the House of Mohammad, Fatimah and her two children Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein, shows that they were the most sincere servants of Islam.

The authentic hadiths spoke of their distinctions and qualifications as permanent allies of justice and truth. Zeid Ibn Arqam reported that the Messenger of God said to Ali, Fatimah, Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein:

“I am at peace with whomever you are at peace; and I am at war with whomever you are at war.”<sup>9</sup>

Abu Huraira reported that the Messenger of God said:

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7. Ibn-Atheer, Al-Kamil (the complete history), Part 3, p. 35.

8. Al-Hakim, Al-Mustadrak, Part 3, p. 26.

9. Ibn Majah, Sunan Ibn Majah, hadith No. 145.

**“Whoever loves Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein loves me; and whoever hates them hates me.”<sup>10</sup>**

Hubshi Ibn Janadah said that he heard the Messenger saying:

**“Ali is from me and I am from Ali and no one represents me but Ali.”<sup>11</sup>**

The Messenger did not intend to distinguish Ali simply because he was related to him. Al-Abbas (his uncle) and the rest of the Hashimites, including Jaafar (the brother of Ali) are all related to the Messenger. All of them would have been qualified to represent him. But he said, “No one represents me but Ali.”

At one time Muaweyah was criticizing Ali in the presence of Saad Ibn Abu Waqass. Saad said to him: “I heard the Messenger of God saying to Ali: ‘You are to me like Aaron to Moses. But there shall be no Prophet (of God) after me.’”<sup>12</sup>

Thus, the Messenger gave Ali a position next to his own, for the position of Aaron was next to that of Moses.

Al-Bukhari recorded in his Sahih that the Messenger said: “Fatimah is the leader of the women of Paradise.”<sup>13</sup>

No one enters Paradise but through righteousness, and whoever enters Paradise is noble in the sight of God. If Fatimah is the leader of the women of Paradise, she must be the most righteous and the noblest woman in God’s view.

Al-Hakim recorded in his Mustadrak, that Abu Tharr (a famous companion of Mohammad whose truthfulness is known to the Muslims) said that the Messenger said:

**“The example of the members of my House is like that of Noah’s ark. Whoever embarked on it was safe, and whoever failed to embark was drowned. . . .”<sup>14</sup>**

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10. *Ibid.*, hadith No. 143.

11. *Ibid.*, hadith No. 119.

12. Ibn Majah, hadith No. 121.

13. Al-Bukhari, Sahih Al-Bukhari, Part 5, (Chapter of distinction of relatives of the Messenger) p. 25.

14. Al-Hakim, Sahih Al-Mustadrak, Part 3, p. 151.

The Messenger of God commanded the Muslims to follow his chosen relatives. Therefore, the relatives of Mohammad are considered to be the party of truth, distinguished because of their merit and work as they rank among the most righteous servants of God.

### WHY WERE THEY SO MERITORIOUS?

Why did the members of the House of Mohammad surpass other Arabs or non-Arabs in righteousness?

#### *Precedents in History*

To understand the reason, we ought to remember that what took place in the House of Mohammad was not unprecedented in the history of Prophethood. There are many similar precedents. The Almighty God made Aaron a partner to his brother Moses in his heavenly mission. He did not bestow this honor on any other person from the Israelites. This was due to the high qualification of Aaron and in response to the prayer of Moses, as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an:

“He (Moses) said: My Lord, Open my mind, and loosen a knot from my tongue; that they may understand my word. Appoint for me a minister from my folk Aaron, my brother. Confirm my strength by him, and let him share my task. . .”<sup>15</sup>

The Prophet Abraham prayed to the Lord to make some of his offsprings imams of the people. God responded to his prayer and promised to make imams from his good offsprings, without allowing any of their wrong doers reach that high rank. From the Holy Qur'an:

“And We gave (Abraham) Isaac and Jacob, and We made recipients of Prophethood and revelation from among his progeny, and We granted him his reward

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15. The Holy Qur'an, Chapter 20, verses 25-32.

in this life, and he was in the Hereafter of the company of the righteous.”<sup>16</sup>

God also has chosen, along with the relatives of Abraham, the relatives of Imran and preferred them above others.

“God chose Adam and Noah, the family of Abraham, and the family of Imran above all people. Offsprings related to each other, and God hears and knows all things.”<sup>17</sup>

Zakaria prayed to the Almighty to grant him a righteous child. God answered his prayer, and the angels gave him good tidings:

“There did Zakaria pray to his Lord, saying: O my Lord, grant unto me from Thee a progeny that is pure; for Thou Art He that hears prayer.”

“While he was standing in prayer in chamber, the angels called unto him: God doth give thee glad tidings of Yahya (John), witnessing the truth of a word from God, and (besides) noble, chaste, and a Prophet of the (goodly) company of the righteous.”<sup>18</sup>

According to these verses the Prophethood which preceded that of Mohammad took the same course. From among the offspring and kinsmen of these Messengers there were chosen persons who reached the highest degree of piety, and therefore deserved to be commissioned by God.

### *Why Did God Give Those Prophets Such Distinguished Children and Relatives?*

The Almighty God created persons among the kinsmen and offspring of these Messengers *in response to their prayers or as a reward to them for their endeavors in spreading the Message of God.*

Like other prophets, Mohammad was given unusual rel-

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16. The Holy Qur'an, Chapter 29, verse 27.

17. The Qur'an, Chapter 3, verses 33 and 34.

18. The Qur'an, Chapter 3, verses 38 and 39.

atives and offspring as a reward for his endeavor in the service of God and in response to his prayers.

He commanded us to say: "God, honor Mohammad and the members of his House," and he prayed for the purity of these members on various occasions.

Al-Hakim reported that the Prophet covered Ali, Fatimah, Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein with a garment and prayed, saying:

"God, these are my family. I ask Thee to honor Mohammad and the family of Mohammad."

In response to his prayer the following revelation came:

"God wants only to keep abomination away from you and make you, members of the family of Mohammad, spotless."<sup>19</sup>

Thus, it was not unusual to have in the kinsmen and offspring of Mohammad distinguished men and women of the highest degree of righteousness. On the contrary, if such persons did not exist among the relatives of the Prophet, it would have been very unusual. God honored Abraham, Moses, Zakaria and other Prophets, by creating in their progeny and relatives distinguished persons, preferring them above other people. Why should He not honor His final and most important Prophet by creating in his offspring and relatives some people with highest distinction?

### *The Prophet's Reward*

The Holy Qur'an makes it explicit clear that the love of relatives of Mohammad is an Islamic duty. God commanded Mohammad to ask the Muslims to reward him for his fulfillment of the heavenly mission, by loving his close kins.

"That is (the bounty) whereof God gives glad tidings to His servants who believe and do righteous deeds. Say: No reward do I ask of you for this except the love of (my) near kins. And if any one earns good deeds, We

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19. Al-Hakim, Al-Mustadrak, Part 3, p. 148.

shall give him an increase of good in respect thereof; God is Oft-Forgiving. Most ready to appreciate (service).”<sup>20</sup>

God is telling Mohammad to inform all Muslims that the only reward he wants for fulfilling his Heavenly mission is that the Muslims love his relatives.

This is only because those members are the most obedient to God and his most beloved servants among the Muslims.

By commanding His Messenger to do so, He actually commanded the Muslims to glorify the chosen relatives of Mohammad, place their confidence in them, and walk in their path.

In compliance with this heavenly command, the Holy Prophet asked *all* his followers to love them. He stated that he is at peace with whomever they are at peace, and that he is at war with whomever they are at war. He considered them to be similar to the ark of Noah. Whoever embarked on it was safe, and whoever failed to be on it was drowned.

The House of Mohammad can be a means of unity to the Muslims. This unity can be realized when Muslims take the attitude which God and His Messenger wanted them to take toward these people. It would be erroneous for the Muslims to separate Mohammad from the Members of his House while he himself wanted to be united with them. This is clearly evident by his instruction that his followers couple his name with his chosen relatives whenever they pray for him, whether within or outside their daily prayers.

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20. The Holy Qur'an, Chapter 42, verse 23.



## 2.

### Members of the House of Mohammad

Relying on the tacit agreement among the Muslims, we assumed the Imam Ali, his wife Fatimah, and their two children Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein are members of the blessed House of Mohammad. The most reliable evidence in this matter is the reported words of the Prophet Mohammad himself where he spoke of *Ahl Beit* Mohammad or his *Itrah*. The reported words of the Messenger on this subject can be classified into two types:

1. The hadiths which contained descriptions that distinguish the House of Mohammad from others who would be excluded by the same descriptions.
2. The hadiths which specify these members.

#### DESCRIPTIVE HADITHS

From the first type are the following:

Jaber Ibn Abdullah, a famous companion, reported that the Messenger of God said:

“O people, I have left for you that which if you follow you will never go astray: the Book of God and the members of my House who are my “Itrah” (close relative and progeny).”<sup>1</sup>

Zeid Ibn Arqam, a well known companion of Mohammad, reported that the Messenger of God said:

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1. Al-Termathi, Sunan Al-Termathi, Part 5, p. 328 (hadith No. 3874).

**“I have left for you that which if you hold fast you shall not go astray after me: The Book of God, a rope extended between Heaven and Earth, and the members of my House who are my Itrah. Certainly both (the Book of God and the members of my House) shall not part from each other until they join me on the Day of Judgement. Beware how you will treat both of them after me.”<sup>2</sup>**

**Zaid Ibn Thabit reported that the Messenger of God said:**

**“I am leaving among you two successors: The Book of God, a rope extended between the Heaven and the earth, and the members of my House who are my Itrah). Certainly they (the Book and the Itrah) will not part from each other until the Day of Judgement.”<sup>3</sup>**

**Zeid Ibn Arqam again reported that the Messenger of God said on the day of Ghadeer Khum:**

**“I am about to be summoned by God, and I shall respond. Certainly, I have left for you the two most valuable legacies. One of them is bigger than the other: The Book of God, and my “Itrah,” members of my House. Beware how you will treat both of them after me. They will not part from each other until the Day of Judgement.”**

**Then he said:**

**“Certainly God is my ‘Moula’ (Guardian), and I am the Moula of every believer.” Then he held Ali’s hand and said: ‘Whoever I am his Moula this is his Moula.’ God, love whoever loves him and cast out of Thy favor whoever antagonizes him.”<sup>4</sup>**

**Accordingly, the members of the House of the Messenger are the ones who possess the following qualifications:**

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- 2. Al-Termathi, Sunan Al-Termathi, Part 5, p. 329 (hadith No. 3876)**
  - 3. Imam Ahmad reported it in his Musnad by two authentic ways, Part 5, p. 181.**
  - 4. Al-Hakim, in his Sahih Al-Mustadrak, Part 3, p. 109.**

1. *To be of Mohammad's Itrah.* Man's Itrah is his close relatives (by birth) and his progeny. By this definition, the wives of the Prophet and his companions from the non-Hashimites are excluded.

2. *Righteousness of the Highest Degree.* The members of the House of the Prophet have been described in these hadiths as true allies of the Qur'an who will never part from it. Thus, unpius men and women would be disqualified for the membership, whether they are Hashimites or non-Hashimites.

3. *To Possess the Highest Degree of Knowledge in the 'Contents of the Holy Qur'an and the Teachings of the Messenger.* Those who have limited knowledge in religion are excluded, even if they are closely related to Mohammad. They are bound by their very lack of knowledge to fall intentionally or unintentionally into disagreement with all Qur'an. The members of the blessed House, according to the hadiths, are secured against disagreement with the Book of God. Such a security cannot exist without a profound knowledge in the Qur'an and all the Islamic teachings.

4. *To Be in Agreement with Each Other.* When there are persons or groups contradicting one another, some of them will be wrong and in disagreement with the Qur'an. Since all members of the House are in agreement with the Holy Qur'an, they must be in full agreement with each other.

5. *To Possess Certitude in all Religious Knowledge.* By this, the Islamic scholars whom we call "Mujtahids" who are capable of conducting religious research and forming their own opinions are excluded, even if they are Hashimites (related to the Prophet). To understand this clearly, a few points ought to be mentioned:

When we try to know the Islamic rules of our devotional or non-devotional actions, our main evidences come from the Qur'an or from the hadiths of the Prophet.

When we find clear and specific instructions in the Qur'an about a certain matter, our knowledge reaches the degree of certitude whether we are Islamic scholars or lay-

men. When we do not have a clear Qur'anic instruction, we solicit that from the hadiths of the Messenger. Some of the hadiths are clear in their indication and reported by numerous companions. Again, our knowledge, through this type of hadith, attains certitude.

The difficulty is that hadiths of this type are not numerous, and the majority of them are reported by one or two or a very few companions. Through such hadiths, our knowledge concerning the rules, which we try to know, never reaches the level of certainty because the conveying companion did not report it to us directly, because he is not living in our time, nor did he record it in a book.

A person received a hadith from a companion. He in turn reported it to another and so on. Later, the hadiths were recorded in a book after they passed through many hands. Thus, our knowledge through this type of hadith would be, at best, conjectural. There are other places at which instructions of the Messenger have been reported unclearly or in two opposite ways. The conclusion can be drawn in such cases only by professional scholars or "mujtahids."

The conclusion reached and the opinions formed by the scholars in any of the above mentioned cases are mostly conjectural. They do not usually reach the height of certainty, nor do they certainly agree with the Book of God.

The probability of disagreement with it is very high, considering only one of the opinions in each case. If we consider two opposite opinions of two scholars, we would be certain that one of them is in disagreement with the Holy Qur'an because the two opinions contradict one another, and the Qur'an cannot agree with two contradictory views.

From this, it becomes clear that the Mujtahids whether Hashimites or non-Hashimites, are not included in the particular membership of the House of Mohammad. This is because the knowledge of Mujtahids is mostly conjectural and in many cases does not agree with actual teaching of the Qur'an, while the knowledge of the members of the House is securely in agreement with the Book of God.

This is because the aforementioned hadiths clearly indicate that the knowledge of the members of the House of Mohammad is a knowledge of certainty rather than a knowledge of conjecture; otherwise, they would have parted in many cases with the Holy Qur'an. By this we ought to consider a mujtahid, such as Abdullah Ibn Abbas, (a cousin of the Prophet), out of the circle of the House, in spite of his extensive knowledge in religion and his close relation to the Holy Prophet. The rest of the companions who were not closely related to Mohammad nor reached the degree of knowledge of Ibn Abbas are obviously excluded.

*How Could It Be Possible for the Members of the House of Mohammad to Obtain a Knowledge of Certainty in All the Islamic Teachings?"* Possession of certainty in religious teachings was very possible at the time of the Messenger. It is very logical to assume that the Prophet taught a disciple of his, such as Ali, all the contents of the Holy Qur'an and informed him of all the Islamic laws which may number a few thousands. It is fair to assume that such a close disciple taught some of his disciples all that he received from the Prophet. These assumptions are supported by certain facts:

Ali was with the Prophet from the time of his childhood until the time of the death of the Prophet. He was his trusted disciple and close associate. He was his keen-minded student who attended his public as well as his private teaching.

Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein (the grandsons of Mohammad and the sons of Ali) lived with their father many years. They were his close associates. They were his most brilliant disciples and the purest Muslims who resembled their teacher and his teacher. Thus, we can say that the certainty of knowledge pertaining to the Holy Qur'an and the instructions of the Prophet was available and possible to some of the disciples of Mohammad.

## THE SPECIFIC HADITHS

Several hadiths of the Prophet named the members of the house of Mohammad. Muslim recorded in his Sahih the following:

“When the (following) verse came down (at the time of a debate between the Messenger and Christians from Najran): ‘If anyone disputes in this matter with thee now after full knowledge has come to thee, say: Let us summon our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves; then let us earnestly pray and invoke the curse of God on those who lie.’ The Messenger of God called Ali, Fatimah, Hassan and Hussein and said: God, these are the members of my family.”<sup>5</sup>

Al-Termathi, Ibn Manthoor, Al-Hakim, Ibn Mardawaih and Al-Bayhaqi in *his Sunan*, all recorded the report of Om-Salemah, wife of the Prophet, in which she said:

“In my own house the (Quranic) verse (from chapter 33): ‘Certainly God wants to keep away all abomination from you, members of the House (of Mohammad) to make you pure and spotless.’ Ali, Fatimah, Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein were at my house. The Messenger of God covered them with a garment, then said: “These are the members of my House. God, keep away abomination from them and make them pure and spotless.”<sup>6</sup>

Muslim in his Sahih recorded that Ayesha Said:

“The Messenger of God came out wearing a wide cloak, made of black hair. Fatimah, Hassan, Hussein, and Ali came successively, then he covered them with his cloak and said: ‘Certainly God wants to keep all abominations away from you, ye members of the House of Mohammad, and make you pure, spotless.’”<sup>7</sup>

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5. Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, Part 15, p. 176.

6. Al-Termathi, *Sunan Al-Termathi*, Part 5, p. 328 (hadith No. 3875).

7. Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, Part 15, p. 194.

The two following hadiths are recorded in *Al-Durr Al-Manthour* by Al-Sayooti (his commentary on the Qur'an).

“Abu Al-Hamra, (one of the companions of the Messenger), reported that the Messenger of God continued eight months in Medina, coming to the door of Ali at every morning prayer, putting his two hands on the two sides of the door and exclaiming: Assalat, Assalat, (prayer, prayer). Certainly God only wants to keep away all abominations from you, ye members of the House of Mohammad, and to make you pure and spotless.”<sup>8</sup>

Ibn Abbas reported:

“We have witnessed the Messenger of God for nine months coming every day to the door of Ali, son of Abu Talib, at the time of each prayer and saying: Assalamu Aleikum Wa-Rahmatullah Ahl Al-Beit (peace and mercy of God be upon you, ye members of the House of Mohammad). Certainly God wants only to keep away all abominations from you, members of the House, and to make you pure and spotless.”<sup>9</sup>

These hadiths clearly indicate that each one of the four is a member of the House of Mohammad. They also exclude all other individuals who were living at the time of Mohammad, the Hashimites as well as the non-Hashimites, from the Arabs and non-Arabs.

### *Members Born After the Prophet Mohammad*

This restrictive statement, however, does not exclude all Hashimites who were born after the time of Mohammad.

The first group of hadiths we advanced indicate that members of the House are to continue after his death and through numerous centuries, because the members, according to the hadiths, shall exist as long as the Qur'an exists.

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8-9. Al-Sayooti, *Al-Durr Al-Manthour*, Part 5, p. 198 (Conveyed by Sayed Taqi Al-Hakeem, *Al-Ossol Al-Ammah for Al-Fiqh Al-Muqaram*, pp. 155-156).

**By commanding the Muslims to follow the Book of God and the members of his House and by declaring that Ali, Fatimah, Al-Hassan, and Al-Hussein are the members of his House, the Holy Prophet actually placed Ali and his two sons at the seat of leadership of the nation.**

**Thus, the two sons did not need to be appointed by their father, and Al-Hussein did not need to be appointed by his brother Al-Hassan.**



### 3.

## The Indispensable People

When we review in retrospect the important events involving the history of a nation, we find that those events and their early evolutions were not dependent on most of the individuals and small groups who lived in those particular times. The presence or the absence of this soldier or that farmer or worker or merchant or politician did not affect those events.

Every individual, except a very few, was dispensable, or it was possible to replace any of them with another person who could have performed a similar role.

There are, of course, some small groups and some individuals who perform important roles which other people cannot or do not want to perform. These small groups and a few individuals would be indispensable, and the big events, therefore, would be connected strongly to these groups and individuals.

The presence of any of the small-role performers (and these are the overwhelming majority in every nation) in relation to the important event ought to be called incidental and dispensable. We say that the presence of such people or small group is incidental and dispensable in relation to an important event because that event could have been realized with or without such persons or group, for everyone of them is easily replaceable.

As we look retrospectively at the onset of the faith of Islam and its gradual spread during the time of the Holy Prophet, we find that Islam was strongly connected with the presence of a small number of individuals and groups.

It is needless to speak about the connection of the faith of Islam with the presence of the Messenger, for he is the one who received the revelation, carried the message and faced what no other person faced. He is the only man whose qualities qualified him to receive the revelation.

As the faith of Islam was dependent on the person of the Holy Messenger in its commencement and continuity during the period of the Prophethood, we find that the continuity of Islam during that period was connected strongly and positively with three small groups who protected the life of the Messenger and offered great sacrifices in his defense.

### *The Hashimites*

The first of these small groups was the clan of Hashim. This clan had offered what no other Meccan clan offered during the years the Holy Prophet spent between the beginning of his Prophethood and the beginning of his Hijra.

This group was privileged with the honor of defending the Holy Prophet during those years. No other Meccan clan shared this honor. The rest of the clans had chosen to take a hostile attitude towards the prophet, his message and his clan. That hostile attitude threatened the Messenger and the members of his clan constantly with serious dangers.

Thus, it would be justifiable to say that the presence of the rest of the Meccan clans in relation to the development of the message during that period was not only incidental, but also a negative force, for those clans did not offer as groups any assistance to the Messenger; in fact, they impeded progress.

Some men and women related to these Meccan clans had believed in the Messenger and offered some sacrifices for him and his message, but they did that as individuals. The groups to which those persons belonged had taken hostile attitudes towards the Messenger and persecuted those individuals because they deviated from their hostile line.

Had Omayad, Makhzoom, Zuhra, Jumah, and the rest

of the Meccan clans been absent, the Holy Prophet and his message could have been freed from many dangers. The Imam Ali in one of his messages, directed to Muaweyah, mentioned the following:

“Our people (the Meccan clans) wanted to kill our Prophet and annihilate our clan. They plotted and committed atrocities against us. They prevented us from the water and clothed us with fear. They forced us to live at a rugged mountain and started the fire of war against us, and the Almighty decided for us to defend His religion and fight for His sacred cause. Our believer was seeking the Divine reward, and our unbeliever was trying to protect his honor. The rest of the Qureshite Muslims were free of what was surrounding us, either through an alliance which protected them or through a relationship to a clan which was ready to defend them. Thus they were in a security against murder.

“Whenever the war became bloody and the companions were unwilling to fight, the Messenger put the members of his House in the front, protecting his companions through them from the heat of the swords and spears.”<sup>1</sup>

#### *The Ousites and the Khazrajites*

The other two small groups with whom the continuity of the faith of Islam was positively connected at another stage of the development of the Islamic movement were the two tribes of Al-Khzraj and Al-Ous. The two tribes were privileged from among the non-Meccan Arab tribes by honor of their defense of the Holy Messenger and his message after the Hijrah. Had other tribes wanted to share with the two tribes this honor they could have acquired it; unfortunately, they chose to oppose the Messenger instead of assisting him.

Thus, the continuity of the faith of Islam was connected to these three small groups. The presence of the rest of the tribes and clans was dispensable and less than incidental

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1. Al-Shareef Al-Radhi Mohammad Ibn Al-Hussein, Nahjule-Balaghah collection of words of the Imam Ali, Part 3, pp. 8-9.

in relation to the faith of Islam in that period. For the presence of those clans and tribes had a negative effect and was fraught with dangers which threatened the life of the Messenger and his message.

### ABU TALIB

As we find these three small groups connected strongly with the message of Islam, the history of this faith presents to us two men whose existence was indispensable and necessary during the period of Prophethood.

One of these two men was Abu Talib, uncle of the Messenger, his guardian during the days of his childhood, and his main defender after the commencement of his Prophethood. The protection by this hero of his nephew and his defense against the threats of the Qureshites (the non-Hashimite Meccan clans) was a main factor in the continuity of life of the Messenger and his message. The Meccan clans were burning with hatred towards the Messenger and anxious to shed his blood. What prevented them from that was the presence of Abu Talib, the chief of Mecca, who led the Hashimites and made out of them and himself an unbreakable fortress around the Messenger.

The readers of the Islamic history know how the Qureshite clans delivered to Abu Talib an ultimatum to stop his nephew from defaming their fathers and belittling their gods and ridiculing their minds; otherwise, they would confront him and Mohammad on a battlefield until one of the two parties perished. Abu Talib did not have any doubt that his acceptance of the Qureshite challenge meant his death and the annihilation of his clan; yet he did not pressure his nephew to stop his campaign. He only informed him of the Qureshite ultimatum, and then he told him kindly:

“Save me and yourself, my nephew, and burden me not with what I cannot bear.”

When the Messenger rejected their ultimatum, declaring to his uncle that he would not exchange his message with the possession of the whole universe, Abu

Talib immediately reversed his attitude and decided to go along with the Messenger to the end. He called him after he turned his back: "Come back, my nephew." When the Messenger came back, the great uncle said to him: "My nephew, go on. Say whatever you like, I shall never let you down at any time."<sup>2</sup>

Abu Talib fulfilled this huge promise with distinction. When a Meccan threw some dirt on the Messenger while he was prostrating, Abu Talib went on brandishing his sword and holding the hand of his nephew until he came to the sacred Mosque. A group of the enemies were sitting there, and when some of them tried to stand for Abu Talib, he said to them:

"By the One in Whom Mohammad believes, if anyone from you stands up I will hit him with my sword." Then he went on putting dirt on their faces and beards.<sup>3</sup>

The Qureshite clans formed a strong alliance against Abu Talib and his clan and resorted to the weapon of starvation instead of confrontation. They knew that the Hashimites would fight if fought; and that they could not be annihilated without costing their adversaries great losses. Thus, the Meccan clans imposed an economical and social embargo against the Hashimites. This continued for three years during which time the Hashimites were forced to live at a rugged mountain called "Shi-ab Abu Talib." The Hashimites during that period were forced sometimes to eat leaves of trees to alleviate the pains of hunger.

During that period, the main concern of the old hero was to protect the life of the Messenger. Abu Talib during those years often made some members of his own family (especially his son Ali) lie at the bed of the Holy Prophet, protecting him by his dearest son, from danger of assassination.

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2. Ibn Husham, *Biography of the Prophet*, Part 1, p. 266.

3. Khalid Mohammad Khalid, *Fee Rihab Ali*.

## ISLAM OF ABU TALIB

A number of historians and hadith-recorders reported that Abu Talib died while he was a pagan. Some of them reported that the verse "It is not permissible to the Prophet and the believers to ask God to forgive the pagans even if they were akin to them, after it became clear to them that those pagans are from the people of Hell," was revealed in relation to Abu Talib, for the Prophet wanted to ask God to forgive him and the Almighty prohibited him from doing that.

Such statements were fabricated as a part of the smear campaign which the Omayyads and their allies waged against Imam Ali. They tried by fabricating these hadiths to prove to the masses of the people that Abu Sufyan, father of Muaweyah was better than Abu Talib, father of Ali, claiming that Abu Sufyan died while he was a Muslim and Abu Talib died while he was a pagan.

The recorders of the hadiths and the historians took these hadiths without paying attention to the evidence of their forgery. They did not try to examine these hadiths, yet the date of the revelation of the above mentioned verse testifies that it was not revealed about a matter pertaining to Abu Talib.

The verse is a part of the chapter of Bara-ah (number 9). This chapter is totally Medinite, with the exception of the last two verses (129 and 130). The verse which is the subject of our discussion is the 114th. The chapter of Bara-ah was revealed during the ninth year after the Hijrah. The Prophet ordered Abu Bakr to announce the first part of it during the days of pilgrimage of that year when he sent him as an "Amir Al-Hajj" (commander of the pilgrimage). Then he sent Ali to take that part from him and announce it, because God commanded him that no one should deliver the revelation other than himself or a man from the members of his House. The chapter speaks of events that took place during the campaign of Tabouk which was during "Rajab" of the ninth year.

Since this chapter contains the above mentioned verse,

the verse could not mean Abu Talib, because he died in Mecca at least two years before the Hijrah.

Asking God to forgive a deceased usually takes place at the time of a funeral prayer. The wording of the verse indicates that, for it says: "It is not permissible to the Prophet and the believers to ask God to forgive the pagans." This indicates that the Prophet was with other believers (in a congregational prayer) when he asked forgiveness for the pagans.

As a matter of fact, the funeral prayer was not instituted before the Hijrah. The first prayer offered by the Messenger for a deceased was his prayer for Al-Bura Ibn Maarour from Medina.

It is likely that the verse was revealed after the Prophet offered a funeral prayer for one of the hypocrites who used to pretend Islam and conceal paganism. It is very likely that the verse was revealed when the Holy Prophet offered a funeral prayer for Abdullah Ibn Abu Salool who died during the ninth year and who was well noted in his hypocrisy, his hatred to the Messenger and his adversity to the faith of Islam. About him and his followers, the chapter of Al-Munafiqoon (the Hypocrites) was revealed before that time. Had the historians and hadith-recorders (who inadvertently mentioned the fabricated hadiths about Abu Talib's paganism) thought with some depth and logic, they would not have committed this terrible historical error.

To say that Abu Talib was a pagan is to say that he was a believer in the divinity of idols. But this belief cannot co-exist with his belief in the truthfulness of Mohammad who denounced idols and considered their deification and worship a defiance to the Creator.

For Abu Talib to believe in the divinity of idols, he either had to believe that Mohammad was deliberately misinforming people about God, or that he was hallucinating. If Abu Talib were pagan and in spite of that he offered so much sacrifice for the sake of Mohammad, he must have been insane or an unusual fool. Had he believed that his nephew was unbalanced or a conscious misinformant about God, Abu Talib should have confined Mohammad and

become his strong opponent rather than his formidable protector, for the mission of Mohammad was expected to bring destruction and death to Abu Talib and his clan.

Abu Talib tied his fate to the fate of his nephew. He was unconcerned with what might happen to him and to his clan. He witnessed the dangers surrounding him and his clan and the difficulties that were accumulating around him because of his protection of his nephew. In spite of all what happened to him and to the members of his clan, history does not record any harsh word on the part of Abu Talib to his nephew. On the contrary, he offered himself and the members of his clan as a redemption to his nephew. He treated him better than any compassionate father treated his most beloved son. He told him: "Nephew, continue your mission and say whatever you desire to say. By God, I shall never leave you to any danger."

Abu Talib was a man of great faith and strong belief in the truthfulness of Mohammad. He lived with that mission about eleven years, and the difficulties for Mohammad and for him increased in size by the passage of time. He was a man of unusual faith in the truthfulness of Islam. History witnessed distinguished companions running away when the danger grew. But Abu Talib did not run away nor did he lose his determination. He continued his sacrifice for the Prophet for the duration of his life.

This should give credence to what Al-Tabersi recorded through his channel to the Imam Jaafar Al-Ssadiq:

"While the Imam Ali was sitting at the 'Ruhbah' in Kufa," surrounded by a group, a man stood up and said: "Commander of the Believers, you are in this great position at which God has placed you while your father is suffering in hell." The Imam replied, saying: "Be silent. May God disfigure your mouth. By the One Who sent Mohammad with the truth, if my father intercedes for every sinner on the face of the earth, God would accept his intercession."<sup>4</sup>

He concealed his faith, and God rewarded him twice.

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4. Al-Tabersi, Al-Ihtijaj, Part 1, p. 341.



He concealed his faith only to protect Mohammad. Had he revealed his belief in Islam, the relation between him and the rest of the Qureshites would have been severed. He wanted to maintain the dialogue between him and the Qureshites and not let it be discontinued, for this could have led to an armed conflict in a decisive battle which might have led to the destruction of his clan. By this, the Hashimite wall around Mohammad would fall and the Meccan pagans could reach him.

In spite of concealing his faith, Abu Talib, on more than one occasion, made his belief in Islam clearly known. While on his deathbed, he said to the Hashimites:

“I command you to be good to Mohammad. He is the most trustworthy of Quraish and the ever-truthful of the Arabs. He brought a message which is accepted by the heart and denied by the tongue for fear of hostility. By God, whoever walks in the path of Mohammad shall be on the right road and whoever follows his guidance shall have the happy future. Had there been a balance in my years, I would have shielded him against dangers and defended him against adversaries.

“And you, the Hashimites, respond to Mohammad’s invitation and believe him. You will succeed and be well-guided. Assist Mohammad; certainly he is the guide to the straight path.”<sup>5</sup>

### *We All Are Indebted to Him*

All Muslims are indebted to Abu Talib, for the continuity of the Islamic Message is a result of the continuation of the life of the Messenger until God completed His message to mankind. The protection of Abu Talib to the Messenger was the main physical deterrent to the Qureshites.

I once made this statement in an Islamic seminar, and the following question was raised: If God is the One Who wanted the message of Islam to continue and to spread,

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5. Khalid Mohammad Khalid, *Fee Rihab Ali*.

was not He able to preserve it and spread it without Abu Talib and his protection to the Messenger?

In my reply, I stated the following: Muslims believe that God was able to preserve the life of the Messenger, and He was able to make all the children of Adam Muslims and believers in God, His oneness, and in the Day of Judgement. He could have made them obedient to all Heavenly laws. He was able to make all the Qureshite clans obedient to Mohammad. He was able also to make all people obedient to His command without creating Mohammad.

Yet, in spite of our belief in all this, we know that God did not do that. He did not make all people believers. He did not interfere directly to change their thinking and their belief. He rather left for them their freedom to choose. This means that God did not want to run the events of the world miraculously and through Divine intervention. He rather wanted to run the affairs of the world in accordance with the natural means and courses. Therefore, He sent revelations down to a human being named Mohammad and spread Islam through that person.

The Almighty did not choose to force the Qureshites to believe or disbelieve. The majority of the Qureshites chose to oppose Mohammad, and Abu Talib chose to believe in his message and to defend him by all of what he had of men and means. This protection of Abu Talib to the Messenger was an important factor in preserving the life of the Messenger and the continuation of his mission until Abu Talib departed from this world.

To attribute paganism to a man such as Abu Talib, who was so benevolent to all Muslims by guarding the life of the Messenger for about eleven years, is one of the worst forms of ungratefulness. It is a reward of great favor by the worst insult.

Abu Talib was the first of two great men with whom the continuity of the faith of Islam was strongly connected, and their presence in relation to the continuity of the faith of Islam was not incidental.

## IMAM ALI

The other man with whom the continuity of the faith of Islam during the days of the Messenger was strongly connected is the son of Abu Talib, Ali, who carried the same mission after his father's death, but on a larger scale.

Numerous companions made great efforts for the sake of Islam and rendered to the Prophet of Islam assistance worthy of appreciation. It is sufficient to mention the three Caliphs: Abu Bakr, Omar and Othman, along with the numerous Meccan companions, such as Al-Zubeir, Talhah, Abdul-Rahman Ibn Ouf, Abu Obeidah Ibn Al-Jarrah, Saad Ibn Abu Waqass, Al-Miqdad Ibn Al-Aswad, Abdullah Ibn Mas-ood and Ammar Ibn Yasir. Add to these, people from the Medinites, men such as Abu Dujana, Qais Ibn Saad, his father Saad Ibn Abadah, Saad Ibn Maath and others from other communities such as Abu Tharr, Salman Al-Farisi and hundreds of companions other than these. All these men endeavored in the way of God by sacrificing some of their wealth or their life or both.

If we review the period of the Prophethood and the roles which these righteous companions performed, we find them indispensable as a group. Yet each one of them as an individual was replaceable by another companion to perform a role similar to his.

It was possible to replace Abu Bakr by Omar to perform a role in a manner similar to his. It was possible to replace Abu Bakr, Omar, and Othman by Abu Obeidah Ibn Al-Jarrah, Talhah and Al-Zubeir. It was possible to replace Saad Ibn Abadah, by Saad Ibn Maath or by his son Qais Ibn Saad Ibn Abadah, or to replace Abu Tharr by Salman or Ammar Ibn Yassir or Al-Miqdad Ibn Al-Aswad. The roles of these companions were close or similar. Had Omar been the companion of the Messenger in the Cave at the night of the Hijrah instead of Abu Bakr, Islam would not have lost by the exchange. But Ali's role in guarding the life of the Messenger could not have been performed but by Ali. It was easy for Ali to perform the role of any other companion during the time of the Messen-

ger, but it was not easy for any other companion to perform Ali's role.

It was easy for Ali to be the companion of the Messenger in the Cave of Thour at the night of the Hijrah. But it was not easy for Abu Bakr or any other companion to lie on the bed of the Messenger, redeeming the Messenger by his life, resigning to receive the Qureshite attack which was expected to come from ten warriors, supported by the rest of the Meccan pagans.

It was not possible for any of the companions of the Messenger to perform the role of Ali at Badr where he destroyed nearly 50 percent of the Qureshites who perished at that battle. Thus, he tipped the scale, through his personal efforts, in favor of the small Islamic army, when the faith of Islam was at stake.

It was not possible for any companion to perform Ali's role at Ohod when the companions ran away, climbing the mountain, not turning their faces to the Messenger while the Messenger was calling upon them to come to him. The Messenger was singled out to face thousands of pagans. No one remained with him except Ali to confront the regiments which were seeking the life of the Messenger. Ali faced them one after another and forced many of them to retreat until a few of the companions came back to defend their Prophet. Had Ali run away as the others did and the pagans reached the Messenger, the direction of the history could have been changed if the Almighty did not protect Islam and His Messenger by a very unusual miracle.

These are only a few of many events which prove clearly that Ali's endeavor was a very substantial factor in bringing about the victory of the Faith of Islam and the defeat of its enemies. This proves that Ali was the protective shield of the Messenger, against the numerous dangers which surrounded his precious life. This means that Ali had two important exclusive honors:

1. *The continuity of Islam which was dependent on the life of the Messenger and his triumph during that period was strongly connected with Ali's presence and endeavor.*

2. *The strong connection between the birth of the*

*Islamic State and his presence.* It was impossible for the Muslim State to be established if the enemies of Islam were to be victorious and able to destroy the new power. Since the endeavors of Ali had a clear effect in tipping the scale in favor of the new power at the decisive battles between the Messenger and his enemies, it would be very true to consider the endeavor of Ali one of the most important factors in the birth of the Islamic State.

How true the word of Omar was when he said to a man accusing Ali with conceit: "By God, the pillar of Islam could not have been established without the sword of Ali."

### UNIQUE BRAVERY SUPPORTED WITH UNIQUE SINCERITY

Ali's unusual bravery and physical strength alone could not make out of him a protective shield for the Messenger, nor could they tie the continuity of Islam and the birth of the Islamic State to his existence. What made him so transcendent was his unusual sincerity to the Heavenly principles and his deep insight by which he discovered the unknown truths and through which his bravery and physical strength were directed to the service of the truth.

History witnessed many men equipped with physical strength and bravery. But the lack of knowledge of the truth or the absence of sincerity toward the truth made them spend what they were given of power in supporting falsehood and combating the truth; or made them self-worshippers spending all their energy for obtaining a false glory or cheap material.

Unlike these, Ali was an example of a different type of men whose knowledge made them directly witness the truth and enjoy sacrifices which other people found unbearable. He accompanied this world bodily while his soul was connected to the higher world. He and the ones whom he exemplified are the ones whom God had chosen to be the rulers on this earth!

#### *His Birth and Childhood*

The strong tie between Ali's endeavor and the birth of

the Islamic State was not a product of chance. It was, rather, the product of spiritual evolution started at an early stage of his life. Ali was being prepared for the unique honor since the days of his childhood. He had the exclusive honor of having the strong ties to the great Messenger who took him to himself during the days of his childhood as a member of his own family. He directed the child's clear mind and illuminated nature towards the truth. He saturated him from the strength of his faith, knowledge, wisdom, and purity.

At the hands of that teacher, Ali grew and his qualities developed. He became a mirror reflecting the lights of the Prophet.

“Abu Talib's wife, Fatima, the daughter of Asad (the lady whom the Messenger used to consider his second mother), gave birth to Ali at the Kaaba. Thus, he was the first human to be born inside the Ancient and Sacred House of God. His birth was thirty years after the birth of the Prophet, and twenty three years before the Hijrah. His mother named him Haidrah (lion) or Asad. His father named him Ali (high). The two names were appropriate, for he was destined to be the lion of God and His Messenger, as he was the highest person after the Messenger who “brothered” him among all Muslims.

“The capability of Abu Talib as a provider was below the need of his family, especially with famine by which the Meccans were plagued at that period. The Prophet suggested to his uncle Al-Abbas that both of them try to lighten the burden of Abu Talib by taking some of his children. Abu Talib honored their request. Abbas took Jaafar, and the Prophet took Ali and kept him with him until the day of the commencement of his Prophethood.”<sup>6</sup>

The Messenger and Al-Abbas were well-to-do, and they were able to offer Abu Talib what he needed of food during that hard period and leave Ali and Jaafar with their

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6. Al-Hakim, *Al-Mustadrak*, Part 3, pp. 5-6 and so in Ibn Husham, *Biography of the Prophet*, Part 1, p. 246.

parents. But the Messenger chose that he and his uncle take the two children to them.

It seems that the Messenger seized upon the opportunity of the famine. He took Ali to him trying to provide him, through his upbringing, with his spiritual food, along with his bodily food, preparing him to the great future which was awaiting him.

It appears that he was willing to do so even if *Quraish* did not have the famine. Ali was the most valuable companion of the Messenger.

The Messenger himself informed us that his relationship to Ali was not incidental. He told him: "Ali, people are from various trees, but you and I are from one tree."<sup>7</sup>

Of course, the Messenger did not mean by this statement that Ali was his relative and first cousin and that their grandfather was Abdul Mutalib, because that is not important information. These facts are common place to people. Furthermore, Al-Abbas and Al-Hamzah were children of Abdul Mutalib and Jaafar and Aqeel were brothers of Ali. Their relationship to the Prophet is like that of Ali to him exactly.

What the Messenger meant is that Ali's soul resembles the soul of the Holy Prophet and that he was strongly connected to him, as an extension of his personality. Thus, he was from the Messenger of God as he spoke of himself: "And I am from the Messenger of God as one of two trees originated from one root, and as the lower arm extending from the upper one."<sup>8</sup>

It seems that the Messenger took Ali to himself while Ali was still a small child, for Ali himself stated the following:

"And you have known my place from the Messenger of God, with the close relationship and the special position. He seated me on his lap, while I was a small child, embracing me, making me join him in his bed,

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7. Al-Hakim, *Al-Mustadrak*, Part 2, p. 241.

8. *Nahjul-Balaghah*, Part 3, p. 73.

touching his holy body and smelling the sweetness of his fragrance. He used to chew the food and put it in my mouth.”<sup>9</sup>

The Prophet lived before the days of Prophethood as a world by himself. He lived in a society in which ignorance and idol-worshiping were prevalent, sanctifying superstition and legalizing the unethical conduct. Yet, he was able to think of what the minds of the people of his society were unable to discern. The purity of his nature enabled him to see and hear what people could not see or hear. He lived in the midst of his society as an island of knowledge, wisdom, and civilization surrounded by an ocean of barbarism and ignorance.

Ali was destined to be a part of that independent world and to live in the atmosphere of that island, without being affected by the surrounding society. He grew up as a light derived from the light of Mohammad. His illuminated nature and keen mind enabled him to follow the steps of the Prophet, living up to his principles and ideals. The Imam spoke of his growth under the direction of the Prophet Mohammad and the influence of his attachment to him in forming his high characters:

“And he (the Messenger of God) never found an untruth in my words or any wrong in my deeds. God had attached to him (Mohammad) from the time of his weaning the greatest of His angels to walk him through the path of virtue and to teach him the highest ethics of the world . . . and I was following him as a baby following his mother. He used to raise for me every day a banner of his ethics and command me to follow it. “He used to seclude himself every year in Hira and I was with him while no one else could see him. And during the early period of Islam, there was only one house sheltering the Messenger of God, Khadijah, and myself as their third, seeing the light of revelation and smelling the fragrance of the prophethood.”<sup>10</sup>

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9. Nahjul-Balaghah, Part 2, p. 157.

10. Nahjul-Balaghah, Part 2, p. 15.



By that time, Ali arrived in his spiritual ascendance to a degree by which he became able to hear and see what the Messenger was hearing and seeing at the days of the commencement of his Prophethood. He (Ali) said that at an occasion which took place during the first few days from the commencement of his Prophethood, the Prophet told him: “. . . Certainly you hear what I hear and you see what I see, but you are not a Prophet. You are a minister and you are on a good path.”

As Ali had covered so much distance in his spiritual development before passing ten years of age, it was only natural for him to add to his special position with the Prophet the other exclusive honor of being the first of the believers in the Prophethood of Mohammad and the fastest in response to his call.

#### 4.

## The First Muslims

Ali's mental capability and the integration of his life with the life of the Messenger enabled him to think as a philosopher while he was ten years old. He was able to arrive at a logical conclusion. The overwhelming majority of the Meccans had for thirteen years refused to open their eyes to the light of Islam and prevented the Messenger of God from reaching their ears. They could not free their minds because they took the attitude of: "We have found our fathers on a road, and we are following their footsteps."

The inclination to walk in the path of the ancestor was, and still is, the main guarantee against the change of religion. This inclination stood, and is still standing as a barrier between great thinkers of Western Society and the acceptance of the Islamic teaching. But Ali, at the tenth year of his age, took the logical attitude.

While Mohammad and Khadijah were praying, Ali entered their room. He stood until the Prophet finished his prayer. "To whom do you prostrate?" Ali asked. "We prostrate to God the One Who commissioned me as a Prophet and commanded me to invite people to Him," the Prophet replied.

The Messenger recited verses from the Holy Qur'an, then invited his cousin to embrace Islam. Ali was fascinated. He asked the Prophet to give him time to consult his father. He spent his night excitedly and on the following day, he came to declare his Islam. He embraced the new faith without taking the advice of his father Abu Talib,

reasoning: "God had created me without consulting Abu Talib. Why should I need his counsel to worship God?"<sup>1</sup>

It is a short statement, but it announces a great deal of independent thinking, capability of forming opinion, and depth in faith. It is a logic which is not marred by contradiction. Ali loved his father and believed that a child owes his father a genuine obedience. But he knew that the obedience of the father is not absolute. It has its own limitation. His counsel ought to be sought only when the matter is not clear. When truth becomes evident, consultation becomes useless. To Ali, the truth of Mohammad was as clear as the daylight. And it had become the duty of Ali to respond to Mohammad's call and to respond to it immediately.

The message is new, and he does not know what the attitude of his father will be toward the new faith. Abu Talib may believe in what his small child believed in. Should this be the case, it would please the father to see his son preceding him in accepting the truth. But Abu Talib may hesitate to accept the new faith, and Ali cannot delay his response to the call of His Lord. The Creator of Abu Talib and of his son has much more right than Abu Talib to be obeyed.

It is well known that Ali was the first Muslim. Ibn Husham recorded that Ali Ibn Abu Talib was the first male to believe in the Messenger of God and that he prayed with him while he was 10 years old.<sup>2</sup> It is reported that when the time of prayer came, the Messenger used to go outside Mecca, accompanying Ali to offer their prayer, then come back in the evening.

It is reported that Anas Ibn Malik said: "The Messenger was commissioned on Monday and Ali believed in him on Tuesday."<sup>3</sup>

Mohammad Ibn Majah in his Sunan and Al-Hakim in

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1. Dr. Mohammad Hussein Haikal, *Hayat Mohammad (Life of Mohammad)*, p. 138.
  2. Ibn Husham, *Al-Searat, (Biography of the Prophet)*, Part 1, p. 245.
  3. *Al-Hakim, Al-Mustadrak*, Part 3, p. 112.

his Mustadrak reported that Ali said: "I am the servant of God and the brother of His Messenger and I am the greatest believer in his Prophethood. No one says this after me but a liar. I prayed seven years before the rest of the people."<sup>4</sup>

Al-Hakim reported that Salman Al-Farisi said that the Messenger of God said: "The first one of you to drink from the Basin on the Day of Judgement is your first Muslim, Ali, son of Abu Talib."<sup>5</sup>

Imam Ahmad Ibn Hunbul recorded that Maaqal Ibn Yasar said that the Messenger of God said to his daughter Fatima: "Would it not please you that I have married you to the first Muslim in my nation, their most knowledgeable and their wisest?"<sup>6</sup>

### *How Valuable Was His Islam?*

Those who argue about his being the first Muslim are not numerous. But there are those who argue about the value of his early adoption of the new faith compared to the conversion of other prominent companions whose Islam was preceded by that of Ali. Ali was still a child in the tenth year of his age, they argue. It would not be expected from such a child to think like a man and base his opinion on logic and wisdom in choosing between alternatives he faces. He, rather, is expected to adopt Islam not because of a sound thinking but because of his attachment to the Holy Prophet, for he was brought up by the Prophet as a member of his family.

Had Ali been an ordinary child, this argument would be sound. But Ali was not an ordinary child during his childhood, nor was he an ordinary man during his manhood. All evidences show that he was one of the genius type of individuals who reached the maturity in their early years and surpassed the average men in understanding the truth and high ideals.

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4. Ibn Majah, Sunan Ibn Majah, Part 1, p. 44 (hadith 120).

5. Al-Hakim, Al-Mustadrak, Part 3, p. 112.

6. Imam Ahmad, Al-Musnad, Part 3, p. 136.

Had Ali been motivated by his attachment to the Holy Prophet, he would not have asked the Prophet to give him time to consult his father. The Prophet was his guardian and teacher and Ali was ready to follow his ethical instructions. The Prophet used to raise for him every day a banner of his ethics and Ali used to follow him as a child follows his mother. He did not ask the Prophet to give him time to consult his father or to think by himself whether he will follow any of his ethical teachings. Yet when he offered him a new religion, he asked the Prophet to give him time to consult his father.

He spent his night thinking, and when the truth became clear to him, he decided not to consult his father after all, and immediately accepted the invitation of the Holy Prophet. He came to the Messenger declaring his Islam and uttering his wise words which neither the ordinary children nor the ordinary men can think of.

The invitation of the Messenger to Ali by itself tells us that the Messenger did not consider him an ordinary child. We did not find in history that the Messenger ever invited any of the children except the Imam Ali. He used to invite only men and women, expecting their children to follow them, because children cannot think for themselves or distinguish between right and wrong. He privileged Ali by inviting him to adopt the new faith while he was ten years old.

In fact he bestowed on him two exclusive honors: He was the only child whom he invited to the faith and above all, he invited him before he invited any of the men.

I would like to say that casting doubt on the importance of Ali's adoption of the faith because of his young age does not accord with our belief in the wisdom of the Messenger and soundness of his opinion. The event which we shall consider in the following chapter indicates that the opinion of the Messenger about Ali does not agree with the opinion of those who argue to the contrary.

**Al-Jahith and other scholars tried to belittle the value of the Islam of Ali because of his young age. They ignored the fact that the Holy Prophet took him as his minister and brother while Ali did not exceed the thirteenth year of his age. This took place at the conference which he held with his close relatives at his house in Mecca. He not only bestowed on him these honors but also told the attending men to obey him.**

## Brother and Minister

During the first three years of the Prophethood, the Prophet did not call people publicly to the new faith. The message remained an unannounced conversation, for its announcement would necessarily lead to a confrontation with the clans of Mecca. The Prophet knew that the Meccan clans and the Masses of Arabia would not hesitate to use any violent means against him if he demanded from them to change their religion.

Yet, this confrontation was inevitable, and expected to be fraught with danger. The message was not revealed in order to be kept secret. It came down to reform mankind and to change the beliefs of the people and the ways of their lives. This could not be realized except by calling to them loudly, warning them openly, and informing them about the message.

For a new religious message or a new ideology to succeed, the man of the message and his followers have to have freedom of speech and practice. Average individuals do not have the courage to embrace a new ideology when its embracement causes them to confront a society that does not sanctify the individual's freedom. Such a society, by its nature, is inclined to violence, and there are not many individuals who are ready to suffer the loss of position, wealth and life for ideals. Just to make the spread of the new ideology feasible in such a society, the freedom of speech and practice must be protected and secured for the potential converts. Otherwise, they would be too terrified to change their religion. This means that the new

ideology will have only a limited success, if any. Only the heroes of an unusual courage would rise above fear, and these are not many.

As to the man of the message, the chance of his success is very slim when his life and relative freedom are not protected though he may be a big hero. His rise above fear does not secure success in a violent society. His death by assassination or other means before establishing his religion will bring his whole mission to an end.

Thus, the first requirement for the success of a new religion, in a non-democratic society, is a protective shield around the life of the man of the message and his relative freedom. He needs strong supporters who will be ready to give their lives for protecting their leader and his message.

If such people are not available, it would be necessary to have at least one supporter of an unusual quality, who is similar to the Messenger in sincerity, courage and strength.

Such a person would be expected to be found among the relatives of the man of the message since the relatives are expected to be more sympathetic to him than others. The Holy Qur'an informs us that when Moses received the Command of God: "Go to Pharaoh, certainly he has exceeded the limit," he asked his Lord to strengthen him through a minister from his own family!

"He (Moses) said: O my Lord, expand my breast. Ease my task for me and remove the impediment from my speech. So they may understand what I say. And give me a minister from my family, Aaron my brother. Add to my strength through him and make him share my task."<sup>1</sup>

Mohammad is the final of the prophets. His message is the conclusion of all heavenly messages. His message, therefore, must succeed and stay forever.

God runs the affairs of the world usually according to the law of cause and effect and through natural courses. Therefore, He did not order His Messenger Mohammad to

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1. Chapter 20, verses 25-32.



face the whole society at once with the invitation to Islam, because this might lead to the failure of the mission rather than to its success. Wanting him to go gradually in his invitation, He issued to him a command (after three years from the beginning of his Prophethood) to begin with his close relatives. From the Holy Qur'an:

“And warn thy nearest kinsmen. And lower thy wing to the believers who follow thee.”<sup>2</sup>

When this command came down, the Messenger of God invited the descendents of Abdul-Muttalib (they were forty men) to a banquet which contained little amounts of food and milk. They ate and drank until they became full. Then the Messenger spoke, saying: “O children of Abdul-Muttalib, by God, I do not know any young man from among the Arabs who has ever brought to his people better than I brought to you. I brought to you the goodness of this world and of the Hereafter, and God has commanded me to invite you to it. Who is among you willing to be my minister in this mission, and he will be my brother, my executor, and my successor in you?”

None of them responded but Ali who was the youngest among them. He stood up and said: “Messenger of God, I will be your minister in this mission.”

The Prophet repeated his invitation, but none responded except Ali who repeated his words. The Prophet put his hand on the neck of Ali and said:

“This is my brother, my executor, and my successor in you. Listen to him and obey him.”

They laughed, saying to Abu Talib: “He ordered you to listen to your son and to obey him.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, the Messenger

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2. Chapter 26, verses 214-215.

3. This hadith is recorded by the following authors:

A. Ibn Al-Atheer, *Al Kamil*, Part 2, p. 22.

B. Al-tabari, *History of Nations, Messengers, and Kings*, Part 2, p. 217.

C. Abu Al-Fida in his *History*, Part 1, p. 116.

D. Imam Ahmad, *Al-Musnad*, Part 1, pp. 111-119.

of God invited his close relatives to embrace Islam, but his main purpose was to find among them a person who would assist him in spreading the message.

Embracing Islam is very important but more important is to find among the converts a person who will be willing to pay a high price for its success. And how many millions of Muslims of today are unwilling to pay the least for Islam!

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### CONFLICTING HADITHS

The two sheikhs: Al-Bukhari and Muslim did not mention this important event though it was reported by many historians and hadith-recorders. Muslim and other hadith-recorders reported an event that took place after this event. They reported the appearance of the Messenger on Al-Safa and his call to the Qureshite clans (the Meccans) and his invitation to them to believe in the new faith. Muslim and these reporters mentioned this late event and tied it with the verse of the warning of the closest relative of the Holy Prophet. Muslim recorded that Abu Huriarah reported the following:

When this verse was revealed: "And warn thy closest relatives," the Messenger of God called the Qureshites and they came together. He addressed them in general and in particular. He said: "O children of Kaab Ibn Lu-ay, save yourselves from Hell. O children of Murrah Ibn Kaab, save yourselves from Hell. O children of Hashim, save yourselves from Hell. O Fatima, save yourself from Hell. For I do not possess any protection for you from God, except that you have relations to me which I would like to observe."<sup>4</sup>

It is amazing that God commanded His Messenger to

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E. Ibn Is-haq, *Al-Baihgai in Al-Dala-il* (Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, *Muntakhab Kansul-Ummal* in the margin of *Musnad Ahmad*, Part 5, pp. 41-42, printed in Beirut by Sader).

4. Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, Part 3, pp. 79-80.

warn the closest of his relatives, who were the children of Abdul-Muttalib, but the Prophet called upon the children of Kaab Ibn Lu-ay and the children of Murrah Ibn Kaab who are from the remotest of his relatives. It is inconceivable that the Messenger of God disobeys what his Lord commanded him to do.

And what is more amazing is that the messenger called upon his daughter (Fatima) publicly, to save herself from Hell, yet she was the purest Muslim girl whose father and mother were the purest parents.

Fatima, at the time of the revelation of the above verse was according to the historians, either two years or eight years old.<sup>5</sup> It would be illogical that the Prophet addresses himself to a two year old child or that he put a pure Muslim girl (who was still a minor, not exceeding eight years of age) on the same level with the pagans of Banu Kaab and Banu Murrah.

And more curious is the hadith of Ayeshah which Muslim recorded in his Sahih as follows: "When the verse of warning was revealed, the Messenger of God said: 'O Fatima, daughter of Mohammad, Safia, daughter of Abdul-Muttalib, I have nothing in my power to protect you against God. Ask me from my wealth whatever you want.'"<sup>6</sup>

This hadith does not agree with the previous one. For this hadith reported that the Holy Prophet addressed himself to the children of Abdul-Muttalib alone, while the other hadith reported that the Holy Prophet publicly addressed himself mostly to other than the Prophet's clan. And most curious in this hadith is that the Messenger addressed himself publicly while on the Safa mainly to his youngest daughter Fatima while she was living with him where he sees her every hour. It is also curious that the address which he directed to her and to the other members of the children of Abdul-Muttalib did not contain any

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5. Al-Hakim in his Mustadrak, Part 3, p. 61, reported that she was born 41 years after the birth of her father.

6. Muslim, in his Sahih, Part 3, pp. 79-80.

message, such as calling upon them to worship God or to avoid idol-worshipping.

Furthermore, Ayesah was not born at the time of the event. The Messenger died when she was still eighteen years old.<sup>7</sup> And this event took place ten years before the Hijrah (twenty years before his death). Abu Hurairah also was not an eye-witness to the event because he saw the Messenger for the first time when the Messenger was coming back from Khaibar. (In the 7th year after the Hijrah).<sup>8</sup>

And more curious than all is that Al-Zamkh-Shari reported that Ayesah, daughter of Abu Bakr and Hafsa, daughter of Omar, were among the ones whom the Holy Prophet addressed after the revelation of this verse of warning (which was revealed before the birth of Ayesah).<sup>9</sup> This clearly indicates that recorders or the reporters of these hadiths were seriously confused. They overlooked the fact that the verse commands the Prophet to warn his closest relatives, who were the children of Abdul-Muttalib, and that the Holy Prophet is not expected to disobey the order of God. What these hadiths reported is opposed to the verse itself, and whatever disagrees with the Holy Qur'an has to be disregarded.

The event which the historians and many hadith recorders reported of holding a conference with his immediate relatives is the only logical course which the Holy Prophet was expected to follow after the revelation of the verse.

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### THE OFFERED REWARD

The Prophet was about to come to a confrontation with the idol-worshippers. Therefore, he needed a minister who had his courage, sincerity, and firmness. Forty men from

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7. Ibn Saad, *Al-Tabaqat*, Part 8, p. 61.

8. *Al-Tabaqat*, Part 4, p. 327.

9. Ali Ibn Burhanuddeen Al-Halabi, *Al-Seerat Al-Halayah*, (Biography of the Prophet), Part 1, p. 321.

the children of Abdul-Muttalib would be an important asset for Islam if they adopted it. But if they were ordinary people, they would not be able to face the masses of Mecca and Arabia.

God will soon command His Messenger to extend his invitation to all of the Arabs, then to other nations as well, and they will violently resist the invitation for years to come.

Forty average persons will be terrified by the hostiles of Mecca and Arabia; yet one man of high courage will be able to face whatever the Messenger will face.

For this, the Prophet spoke to them about this important goal after a very short introduction, saying:

“Who is among you willing to be my minister in this mission? (Whoever is willing to be so,) will be my brother, executor, and successor.”

*How Could the Prophet Make Such a Promise?* Suppose all or most of them had accepted Islam at the meeting and promised him their assistance. What could he do? It may be conceivable that all of them would become his brothers, but it is very hard to conceive that all of them would be his executors. And if this is probable, it is not conceivable that everyone of them would be his successor.

With a little analysis, one may know the answer.

The Messenger was well aware that the majority of them would not have the courage to pledge to him a genuine support of Islam. For such a pledge would put them face to face with the whole society and draw them into a war which might end with the loss of their lives. A true assistant of the Messenger must be an unusual person, and the majority of the attendants were just average people. What happened at the meeting clearly substantiates the truth of what the Prophet expected. None of them was willing, nor had the daring spirit, to pledge to him assistance except one person, and the following years proved that he was the man for the job.

### *Why These Specific Rewards?*

The Prophet evidently wanted to follow the footsteps of Moses. Moses asked his Lord to give him a minister from his own family, and here the Prophet Mohammad gathered his close relatives seeking from among them a minister. The minister of Moses was his brother Aaron. The Prophet Mohammad did not have a brother because he was the only child of his parents, Abdullah and Aminah. To follow the course of Moses he wanted to make his minister also his brother.

The same applies to the position of successor. Aaron was the successor of Moses among his people when Moses went to the mountain to hear the words of his Lord and secluded himself for forty nights. Before going to the mountain, he said to Aaron, according to the Holy Qur'an:

“Be my successor among my people and do good and follow not the path of mischief makers.”<sup>10</sup>

What the Prophet said to Ali, many years after this event, supports this understanding and confirms its soundness. Leaving him in Medina when he took his long journey to Tabouk, he said to him:

“Ali, will it not satisfy you to be to me like Aaron to Moses except that there will be no prophet after me?”<sup>11</sup>

Giving Ali all the ranks of Aaron with the exception of the Prophethood means that Ali was like Aaron in the rest of the ranks: The ministry, the brotherhood and the succession. The statement of the Prophet at the above mentioned conference and this statement are consistent with each other, and they aim at one purpose.

### *Why Such a Big Reward for a Ministry?*

It may be said: Why should the Holy Prophet give Ali

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10. Chapter 7, verse 142.

11. Muslim in his Sahih, Part 15, p. 175; Al-Bukhari reported it in his Sahih Part 5.

such a big reward for his ministry? Is not the rank of assistant (or minister) to the Prophet a high reward by itself?

The answer is that the ministry of Ali is not a reward from the Prophet as much as it is a gift from Ali. This ministry or assistance is a tremendous sacrifice on the part of the minister. To make this clear, I would like to say that there are two types of ministry:

1. *A Ministry of Administrating the Affairs* of an established state. The man of such a ministry is a counselor to the head of the state by authorization from his superior or from the congress or from the people.

2. *A Ministry of Founding and Establishing a State.* The minister here would be the assistant of his superior in bringing into being a state which did not exist yet or in spreading a new faith which is not yet known to the people. The mission of a minister of this kind is to carry with his superior the tremendous responsibility of establishing a faith and a state and to face with him all dangers. He would be his protective shield, constantly ready to sacrifice himself for the safety of his superior.

A ministry of the first kind is a gift from the head of the state to his minister and a great honor bestowed on him by elevating him to a high office.

The ministry of the second kind is not a gift from the superior as much as it is a gift from the minister. It is a tremendous sacrifice which the minister offers continuously for the protection of his superior and for making his mission a success. A minister of this kind faces with his superior dangers and difficulties which could not be faced by a human multitude.

The minister whom the Holy Prophet was seeking from among the members of his clan was from the second, rather than from the first kind. There was no established state, nor was there yet any Muslim community. The Messenger of God was not (and even after the Islamic State was established) in need of a counselor to advise him how to spread the message or to found a state. He was in need of a person of unusual sincerity and heroism, with an absolute obedience to God and His Messenger.

A person that deserves to be the brother of the Messenger of God and his successor after his absence from this world must have a soul that is virtuous enough to be an extension of the soul of the Prophet himself. He must resemble him to a high degree in knowledge, wisdom, and rise above self interest. In other words, he must be a replica of the great Prophet.

Yes, the Messenger of God was not in need of a person who advises him about the wise course he should take. The Messenger was the most intelligent and the wisest. He only was in need of a minister who would assist him by his big action, sacrifices and heroic work. That minister would be the recipient of his knowledge and when the need arises, he will be able to represent the Messenger and sit on his chair after him.

*The Prophet Wanted to Have No Excuses.*

One should not doubt for a minute that the Messenger of God was aware of who will be his minister before he spoke to the members of his clan. He knew that there was none among the group that had the quality of the needed minister but Ali.

However, the Messenger would not choose Ali to the high offices without leaving no excuse for the rest of his relatives. He would not let the coming generations say that if he had asked someone other than Ali, he would have found many qualified persons. He would not let us wonder whether the Messenger had a favoritism towards Ali and distinguished him without a clear reason. It was necessary to give the rest of the members of his clan the opportunity to make them show their attitude and to make the merit of Ali evident.

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THE OUTCOME OF THE CONFERENCE  
OF THE HOUSE OF THE PROPHET

The conference to which the Messenger called the children of Abdul-Muttalib produced a unique pact; history



has never witnessed its like nor has it witnessed its equal in nobility and high aim. It is a covenant between the final Prophet of God, the Conveyor of the Message of the Heaven, and his minister Ali Ibn Abu Talib who at the time of the covenant was not above the thirteenth year of his age. The substance of the covenant was two items:

1. A pledge on the part of Ali to the Prophet to be his minister in fulfilling his great mission.

2. A promise by the Holy Prophet, put in a form of a declaration in which he told the members of his clan, while his hand was on Ali's head: "This is my brother, my executor, and my successor in you. Listen to him and obey him."

It is worthy to note that the Messenger fulfilled his promise immediately at the conference. He did not wait for Ali to fulfill his pledge. The Prophet put his promise in a form of an immediate reward to his minister. He declared while he was still at the conference that Ali was his brother and made him his executor and successor. He did not wait for Ali to fulfill his pledge because he knew that Ali's word carried its full meaning and that his word and his deed were united and never would contradict each other. Ali put himself at the disposal of the Messenger from the minute he uttered his pledge. Several years elapsed before the Holy Prophet needed Ali's immediate assistance. Ali's father was still alive and strong, guarding the life of the Messenger; and the believers were not yet permitted by God to fight their adversaries. Also the danger against the Holy Prophet had not reached its peak.

The dangerous hour came ten years after the conference and after Abu Talib departed from this world. The Meccan chiefs in their "Nadwa" (club) conferred and decided to bring to an end the life of the Messenger by assassination. The Prophet called upon his minister to start fulfilling his pledge. Thus, the night of redemption came and Ali was the redeemer of the Messenger and his Trustee.

Ali pronounced his word while he knew the magnitude of the mission in which he pledged to assist the Prophet. He was fully aware that due to its magnitude the mission

seemed to be impossible. The mission aimed at changing the beliefs of the society and its ways of life.

It aimed at making the society embrace Heavenly principles that do not agree with its nature. Ali knew that it would be opposed by all forces in society. He knew that the success of this mission could not be achieved unless it prevailed against all adversary forces and that this required the establishment of an Islamic state based on the foundation of the newly revealed principles. Such a state would protect those principles and the freedom of their followers. Such a mission cannot be accomplished even by a whole nation, regardless of what it may muster of forces. This mission is what the Messenger was determined to achieve and it is the mission which Ali promised to support by his assistance and by facing all what the Prophet will face in its achievement.

As the conference yielded this result, it was expected that Ali will fulfill his huge pledge as it was expected that the Holy Prophet will declare, in the future, to all Muslims what he had declared to his immediate relatives concerning Ali. We shall see in the following pages that Ali fulfilled what he pledged to the Messenger and that the Messenger, after the birth of the Islamic State, had declared to the Muslims what he declared to the forty men from the children of Abdul-Muttalib.

## 6.

# The Redeemer

The rapid increase of the number of Muslims in Medina heartened the Medinites and encouraged them to invite the Prophet to move to their city, pledging to defend him with all their power. Upon this pledge, the Holy Prophet accepted their invitation. The Meccan pagans knew about what took place. They conferred secretly and reached the conclusion that the death of Mohammad was the only means to stop the spread of Islam. From each clan in Mecca a strong and courageous man was selected to attack Mohammad at an appointed night. Thus, all the Meccan clans would be participants in his murder.

The Almighty revealed to His Messenger the news of the conspiracy and ordered him to depart from Mecca at the appointed night. His departure while under their surveillance was expected to put him face to face with danger.

Like other Meccan houses, the house of the Prophet was not sight proof. An outsider could see its inside. The bed of Mohammad, therefore, should not be unoccupied; otherwise, the enemies would discover his departure and block the roads and search the houses to find him. But whoever occupied Mohammad's bed at that night should be ready to die, for the attack was surely coming.

The Messenger revealed to Ali the news of the conspiracy and asked him to lie on his bed. As expected, Ali neither declined the dangerous invitation, nor did he think of his own fate. He only thought of one important thing: The fate of the Prophet. "Messenger of God," he asked: "Will you be safe?" When the Prophet replied in the affir-

mative, Ali went down to the earth prostrating, thanking God for the safety of His Messenger.

The Holy Prophet commissioned Ali with another mission: He asked him to deliver to the Meccans, in the following days, their trusts which were in the possession of the Prophet. The Messenger was the trustee of the Meccans, friends and enemies alike. He was to them the Trustworthy. No one should deliver those trusts on behalf of the Prophet other than his trustee and representative, Ali.

The recorders of the hadith reported that the Messenger commissioned Ali with a third mission that night. Al-Hakim reported that Ali said that the Messenger accompanied him to the Kaaba (on the night of the Hijrah) to try to destroy Quraish's biggest idol. The Messenger mounted the shoulders of Ali in order to reach the roof of the Kaaba, but he found some weakness in Ali. He went down and told Ali to mount his shoulders and he did. And the Messenger rose up. Ali felt that if he wanted to reach Heaven he could. Ali went up to the roof of the Kaaba. He shook the largest idol which was made of copper, being bound to the roof. When he took hold of the idol, the Prophet told him to throw it down. He did and the idol was broken.<sup>1</sup>

It seemed that this mission was completed before the conspirators surrounded the house of the Prophet, and that the Prophet and Ali came back to the house after fulfilling this mission; then the Prophet left when the enemies were surrounding his house. Ali remained to fulfill the other two great missions: Occupying the bed of the Messenger and delivering to the Meccans their trusts.

Ibn Al-Atheer in his history (Al-Kamil) reported that Gabriel came to the Prophet and told him not to lie on his bed that night and that the Prophet ordered Ali to lie on his bed. He also commissioned him to deliver what was in his possession of the trusts to the Meccans and informed him that the enemies would not harm him.

The Prophet took a handful of soil and threw it on the

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1. Al-Hakim, Al-Mustadrak, Part 3, p. 5.

heads of the enemies who were surrounding his house and left unnoticed, reciting the chapter of Yasine. Seeing the bed of the Prophet occupied, the enemies believed that Mohammad was sleeping on his bed. They waited until morning and when Ali rose from the bed, they recognized him. "Where is Mohammad?" they asked. "I do not know," Ali replied. "You ordered him to leave and he left." They beat Ali up, brought him to the Mosque, detained him for one hour, then freed him.<sup>2</sup>

It is also reported that when the dawn drew nigh, they dashed into the house and were surprised to find that the occupier of the bed was Ali, rather than Mohammad. Ali stood up and they asked him: "Where is Mohammad?" He denied any knowledge about his whereabouts. Violence erupted, and Ali pressed the hand of their leader, making the sword of the man fall from his hand. Seizing upon the sword, he was able to drive them out.

The chiefs of Mecca realized that their conspiracy was abortive. The Meccans, in groups, went in every direction trying to find Mohammad. One group, led by a tracker, took the right direction until they approached the Cave of Thour. Hearing the rumble of their feet, Abu Bakr who was hiding with the prophet, was extremely frightened and sweating. As they came to the mouth of the Cave, Abu Bakr whispered in the ear of the Prophet: "If one of them looks under his feet, he will see us." The Prophet calmly replied: "Be not afraid, God is with us."

The Almighty protected His Prophet from his enemies, and the historical Hijrah, by which the faith of Islam and the Muslims were transferred from a state of weakness to a state of dignity and strength, commenced.

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## THE MAGNITUDE OF THE MISSION

Let us try to evaluate Ali's sacrifice and the magnitude of his mission. When the Prophet accepted the invitation of the Muslims of Medina, the Muslims in Mecca numbered

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2. Ibn Al-Atheer in his history, Al-Kamil, Part 2, p. 72.

about 150. The Prophet permitted, or rather urged, these Muslims to migrate to Medina. He did that in spite of his awareness of the new danger which resulted from his covenant with the Medinites. He knew that the Meccans would not let him depart from their city safely. He could have kept a number of prominent Muslims around him to shield him against the imminent danger. He could also commission any one of them to occupy his bed at such a time. But he did not do that; instead, he urged them to leave Mecca ahead of him and kept Ali for the hard task. He chose Ali because he knew that an occupant of his bed that night must have the following qualities:

1. His love to God, His Messenger and His religion should be stronger than his love to himself.

2. He must be endowed with a courageous spirit that would enable him to face death for the Divine cause with satisfaction.

3. He should have an indomitable spirit with which he would not be frightened by his aloneness, while facing the violent wrath of the Meccan community because he foiled their plot against the Prophet. In addition to this, he had to be patient enough to withhold all information about the Prophet, regardless of what he might face of torture.

It was extremely difficult, if not impossible, to find a person other than Ali ready to perform such a role and do it so calmly without fear.

Here we may understand the meaning of the ministry and assistance which Ali promised the Prophet ten years before the time of this event.

### *Significance of the Delivery of the Trusts*

It is worthy to note that the Prophet commissioned Ali with the delivery of the trusts to the Meccans. This clearly put in action what he promised Ali of executorship. The Messenger could have commissioned someone other than Ali to deliver the trusts. Ali's survival was highly in doubt, because of his dangerous mission. The rest of the Muslims were in no danger; thus, the Prophet would be expected to commission Abu Bakr or another companion with the

delivery of the trusts rather than Ali. Yet he chose Ali in spite of the dangers with which he was surrounded.

### *A Miraculous Prophecy*

Choosing Ali to deliver the trusts proves that Ali was the only person representing the Prophet. Deputizing Ali, by itself, was a unique prophecy. God revealed to Moham-mad that Ali would pass the crisis safely and that he would be in a position to deliver the trusts. Had the Prophet not been certain that Ali would survive the crisis, he would have commissioned someone other than Ali with the trusts. Their delivery was a duty whose imperativeness compelled the Prophet to choose the surest way in delivering them. Thus, it was the duty of the Messenger to choose for such a mission a person who was expected to survive, rather than a person who was expected to die.

### *Value Undiminished*

The reader may think that Ali was certain of his survival and his certainty came from information of the Holy Prophet and from his being commissioned by him to deliver the trusts, for this indicates that the Prophet was sure of Ali's survival. If this were the case, the event would lose its importance, for the occupant of the bed of the Prophet would not be harmed, regardless of the magnitude of the danger.

The fact is that the Messenger of God commissioned Ali with the delivery of the trusts after he accepted the mission of redemption without hesitation or concern with what would happen to him during that night. It was equal to Ali to stay alive or to die as long as the Prophet was safe. Ali was the one who used to seek martyrdom as an ultimate goal. He believed that martyrdom is the great gain and the highest form of victory. We know the truth of this when we read what is recorded in Nahjul-Balaghah where he speaks about the revelation of the following verse: "Do men think that they will be left alone, saying: 'We believe,' without being tested?"

The Imam tells us that when this verse was revealed, he reminded the Prophet of a statement he made when the Imam was saddened because he did not obtain martyrdom which many other Muslims obtained at the Battle of Ohod. The Prophet told him at that time: "Be cheerful, martyrdom is coming to you." The Prophet confirmed his previous statement saying: "That will be so. How will your patience be at that time?" The Imam retorted: "Messenger of God, this will not be a place of patience. It will be a place of cheerfulness and thanks."<sup>3</sup>

The Almighty informed the Messenger, when he was migrating to Medina that he would come back to Mecca: "Certainly the one who commanded you to deliver the message of the Holy Qur'an will bring you back. . . ." This revelation was a promise from God to His Prophet to make him survive all difficulties until he returns him to Mecca, regardless of any battles he attends. Thus, the Prophet had attended numerous battles while he was certain of his safety. This did not diminish the value of his endeavor, for he was determined to do that even if he were not promised with a Divine protection.

This is true also concerning Ali. His belief in his survival until he delivered the trusts does not diminish the magnitude of his sacrifice, because he was ready to make that sacrifice and to redeem the Prophet whether he was informed of his survival or his martyrdom. The history of Ali after the Hijrah substantiates this conclusion. The Prophet did not inform Ali that he would survive the battle of Ohod, but that did not prevent him from staying with the Messenger, protecting him by himself, and combating the regiments one after another and forcing them to retreat after all companions ran away.

The Almighty protected His Messenger from the Qureshite conspirators and enabled him to arrive in Medina safely where he found strength and support. But Quraish was not expected to adopt a peaceful attitude or to sleep while Mohammad was alive. To them his very existence

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3. Nahjul Balaghah, Part 2, p. 5.



was a tremendous danger, threatening their religion and influence. They expected his power to grow by the passage of time and that he would come back accompanying an army that Quraish could not face.

Certainly the survival of the Messenger made the Qureshites more eager and determined to kill him and more violent in combating him. They were expected to wage a long war against him and his followers. They were ready to use whatever they had of power and influence to fight him, and to stir up the pagans and non-pagan tribes against him. They wanted to succeed in accomplishing by confrontation what they could not accomplish through attempts of assassination.

Ali's redemption of the Holy Prophet at the night of the Hijrah was a fulfillment of the pledge which he made at the conference of the House where he promised the Holy Prophet to be his minister. The events which followed the Hijrah demanded from Ali assistance to the Prophet much more and greater in size and magnitude, year after year until the victory of the Heavenly message was realized.

The Faith of Islam could not have continued and spread unless the followers of Islam were liberated from fear and enabled to enjoy religious freedom. This could not be realized unless a powerful state, based on the principles of the new faith is established. Such a state could not be established unless the evil forces which were threatening the faith are defeated.

We shall see in the following pages that Ali was that unique minister who was great enough to assist the Prophet to achieve these goals.

Thus Ali earned the two honors of being the Redeemer of the Final of the Prophets and the honor of being the executor of the Prophet (in action) whom he deputized to deliver to the Meccans what was in his possession of their trusts. Both honors were unique.

When his two missions were so successfully fulfilled, Ali set out towards Medina. As he arrived to Qoba, he found the Holy Prophet waiting for him to enter with him the city, which was destined to be the capital of Islam.

## 7.

# Ali's Role in Building the Islamic State

Self-determination is an inalienable right of every nation, and every nation, therefore, has the right to establish a state and institute a national government.

Such a state has the right to unite all its people under one banner, unless legitimate governments for sections of one nation had been already established. These rights are natural and no power has the right to prevent a nation or a people of a country from exercising them.

The Arab nation at the time of the Messenger was no exception. It had the right to establish a state and institute a government. This was not only a right but also the duty of the Arab nation. Yet, due to unusual circumstances, the Arab people in Hijaz, Najd and Tuhama, were living without government of any kind. There was no power to stop a public offender and enable people to live in peace and security for their wealth, lives, and honors.

The Arab tribes were reciprocating hostilities. No honor, blood, or property of a tribe was sacred to other tribes. Anarchy to them was a matter of course and no change was necessary; and if anyone thought of a change, he did not have the means to realize it.

The rest of the Arab people in Yemen, Syria, and Iraq, were ruled by foreign powers who did not have the right to rule them.

It was a duty of any new government to try to liberate these people from foreign domination and unite them with the rest of the Arabs, regardless of any religious principles.

But there was no one to fulfill this duty or exercise these rights.

The Almighty wanted to deliver the Arabs and other nations and liberate them from their social, political, and religious anarchies. He sent Mohammad to lead mankind to the right road and wanted the Arab nation to be the starting point. Probably, the Arabs were the most needy for such a guidance, and should they be guided by a heavenly leader, they would be well qualified to carry His message to other nations.

The Messenger tried to deliver His message and to establish a state. The forces of anarchy from pagans and non-pagans tried with all their means to prevent him from fulfilling his mission, waging against him a relentless war. It was impossible for him to fulfill his mission without accepting their challenge and meeting them at the battlefield and defeating them completely.

It was the right as well as the duty of the Holy Prophet to defeat the adversary forces in order to establish a new state from a new and ideal kind.

The Islamic State which he was trying to establish was not a subduing force which ruled people against their own will and imposed itself above them. The Messenger wanted to found a state and a government in which the ruler and the ruled are equal and brothers to each other.

A strong individual or group in this state, would not be respected for strength, nor would the weak be deprived of his right because of his weakness. The government the Prophet wanted to establish was projected to direct mankind to the Creator of the Universe and make the nations as well as the individuals realize that He is their True Ruler. Thus, they would obey His command and obtain the projected worldly and spiritual happiness in His obedience. The Projected government would develop as a spontaneous outcome of their adherence to a set of principles which elevated people to make them live spiritually above their own human level.

## THESIS VERSUS ANTITHESIS

The anarchic and evil forces of Mecca and other Arab communities did not only deny Mohammad the right to establish a state and a government, but also tried to prevent him and his followers from exercising their religious devotion. They denied him and his followers the right to live, as long as they believed in one God.

These forces drove Mohammad and his followers out of their homes and properties. They wanted to shed his blood and the blood of his followers. Had these forces done nothing other than preventing him from establishing a state, he would have had the right to combat them and defeat them, for the continuation of their power meant the continuation of injustice towards the weak and the absence of security in society; above all that, the Almighty would not be worshiped and His Oneness would not be acknowledged.

The adverse elements were the opposite barriers the removal of which was a necessary requirement for establishing the projected state. It was impossible to bring such a state into existence without destroying its opposite. Thus, the Heavenly state was destined to be born on the battlefield when the founder of the state and his followers were accepting the challenges of the evil forces, one after another. Had these forces been able to prevail on the battlefield, the Islamic state could not have been born or continued to exist.

### *Quality Versus Quantity:*

Muslims at the beginning of the Hijrah were a very small minority compared to the rest of the Arab forces which stood against them. They were overwhelmingly outnumbered and poorly equipped.

For the Faith of Islam to triumph and establish a state, it had to have one of the two following methods:

1. A Divine intervention through which the evil forces would be miraculously destroyed. God is able to do that and nothing is beyond His power. Whenever He wants to

do anything He only says: "Be, and it is." However, it is evident that this was not to happen.

The Almighty runs the events of the world through the natural courses. He tests the believers, and they do not pass the test unless they try to fulfill what He commands them to do, offering in His way what they possess of resourcefulness and power.

2. The other way by which the small Islamic minority could obtain victory was to have a superior quality which enabled it to prevail against opponents with quantitative superiority. This is what took place.

### *The Unique Hero*

Here we find Ali Ibn Abu Talib next to the Messenger. He proved to be a unique hero and a giant; mankind had never witnessed his equal in the history of "Jihad." The reader may remember that the Messenger of God gathered his close relatives after the commencement of his Prophethood, seeking from among them a minister to assist him in his difficult mission. None of the Hashimites other than Ali responded to his call. "Prophet of God," he said, "I shall be your minister." The Prophet upon hearing this, told the Hashimites: "This (Ali) is my brother, executor, and successor."

This event took place ten years before the Hijrah, when Ali was thirteen years old. During the ten years which followed the event, Ali's manhood reached its unequalled strength. This became crystal clear at the night of Hijrah when he lay on the bed of the Messenger, giving the highest example in the history of Islamic redemption. This manhood was destined to be transformed into a unique heroism when the Messenger and his followers accepted the challenge of their enemies and went on defending their sacred freedom, trying to bring about the birth of the Islamic State which was conceived to carry the torch of guidance for mankind.

No one other than the Messenger expected the word "Wazeeruk" (your minister) which Ali uttered at the historical conference to be so full of its meaning and flowing

with so much of heroism. The Messenger was the only one who expected from Ali all his future record.

The Messenger was the architect and the founder of the Islamic State. His minister Ali was the eliminator of the obstructive forces which stood in the way of its establishment, for he was the hero and the bearer of the banner of the Messenger in every decisive battle.<sup>1</sup>

The Messenger made him the commander-in-chief of every expedition he attended. He never placed him under any command other than his. Whenever he carried the banner of the Messenger, he came back with an impressive victory and history. His leadership was unique in style. He was not a commander who was defended by his soldiers. He was, rather, the leader who stood in the front line, literally leading his soldiers. On more than one occasion, his soldiers took refuge in him, and he was their protector at more than one battle. On occasions, the bulk of the companions ran away, leaving the Messenger alone, and Ali stood along with him, compensating him through his heroic performance for what the Prophet missed of their defensive actions.

Ali attended eighteen battles with the Messenger. In addition, he led numerous expeditions. It suffices to mention briefly his indispensable contributions in four decisive battles: Badr, Ohod, the Moat, and Kheibar. These four battles were truly the battles of destiny for Islam and Muslims. The future of Islam was dependent upon their outcomes.

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1. Ibn Saad, in his *Al-Tabaqat*, Part 3, p. 25.

*Al-Hakim* also reported that in his *Al-Mustadrak*, Part 3, p. 111.

## At Badr

The Battle of Badr was the most important among the Islamic Battles of Destiny. For the first time the followers of the new faith were put into a serious test. Had victory been the lot of the pagan army while the Islamic forces were still at the beginning of their developments, the faith of Islam could have come to an end.

No one was as aware of the importance of the outcome of the Battle as the Holy Prophet. We might read the depth of his anxiety in his prayer before the beginning of the Battle when he stood up supplicating his Lord:

“God, this is Quraish. It has come with all its arrogance and boastfulness, trying to discredit Thy Apostle. God, I ask Thee to humiliate them tomorrow. God, if this Muslim band will perish today, Thou shall not be worshiped!”<sup>1</sup>

At this battle in which the pagan army consisted of 950 fighters and the Muslims did not exceed 314 (including the Messenger), the Islamic defense was a combination of three elements resembling three defensive lines:

1. The personality of the Messenger, his leadership and his unequalled firmness. He was to the Muslims the final refuge at Badr and at every battle he attended.

2. The Hashimites (the clan of the Prophet), led by Ali Ibn Abu Talib who entered this Battle relatively obscure and came out of it with unequalled military fame. His military performances became the popular subject of the Arab caravans' conversations throughout the Arabic Peninsula.

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1. Ibn Husam, Biography of the Prophet, Part 2, p. 621.

3. The hundreds of companions of the Messenger whose hearts were filled with faith and readiness for sacrifice. Many of them viewed martyrdom to be a gain, equal to life and victory. These good companions were the army of Islam, its first line of defense and the thick wall behind which the Messenger used to stand. They were defenders and they were attackers.

As to the clan of the Messenger, they were the ones whom he used to call, before any one else, to offer the heavy sacrifice. They used to stand in the first line of defense, opening for the army the way through their thrusts in the lines of the enemies. When the general offensives began and every companion present participated, the clan of the Messenger were the most damaging to the enemies. They were so at Badr and at the following battles.

The battle began when Utbah Ibn Rabi-ah, his son Al-Waleed, and his brother Sheibah (all from Omayyad) stood in front of their pagan army and asked the Prophet to send to them their equals for a duel. Hundreds of companions were around him, and many of them were expecting to be called upon by the Prophet, but he chose to start with his own family. The load was heavy and the heavy load could be carried only by the people to whom it belonged. He called upon Ali, Al-Hamzah and Obeidah Ibn Al-Harith (all from the clan of the Prophet) to face the three warriors. Ali destroyed Al-Waleed and Al-Hamzah killed Utbah; then they both assisted Obeidah against his opponent Sheibah. Sheibah died immediately and Obeidah was the first martyr at this battle. He died after he lost his leg.

When the general offensive began, hundreds of companions participated in the battle. They offered sacrifices and pleased their Lord. But the members of the House of the Messenger distinguished themselves. Ali's endeavor was unique at this battle. When Hanthala Ibn Abu Sufyan faced him, Ali liquified his eyes with one blow from his sword. He annihilated Al-Auss Ibn Sa-eed, and met Tuaima Ibn Oday and transfixing him with his spear, saying: "You shall not dispute with us in God after today."



The Messenger took a handful of gravel when the battle was extremely heated. He threw it at the faces of the pagans, saying: "May your faces be disfigured. God, terrify their hearts and invalidate their feet." The pagans ran away, turning their faces to no one.

The Muslims went on, killing them and taking prisoners. Seventy pagans met their death, and the Muslims took from them seventy prisoners. History preserved in its records only fifty of the names out of the seventy pagan losses. Twenty<sup>2</sup>, or twenty-two<sup>3</sup> of them, died at Ali's hands.

This battle laid the foundation of the Islamic State and made out of the Muslims a force to be reckoned with by the dwellers of the Arabic Peninsula.

However, we should not overlook the fact that it took three hundred and twelve companions to achieve sixty percent of the outcome of the battle, while Ali alone achieved at least forty percent of it. It is not an exaggeration to say that his endeavor was a very substantial factor in bringing the battle to its victorious conclusion. Should we subtract his forty percent, the outcome of the battle might have changed. On the other hand, if we subtract any other single companion in that battle, the outcome of the battle would not have changed.

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2. Ibn Husham, *Biography of the Prophet*, pp. 708-713.

3. *Al-Waqidi, Al-Maghazi* (Oxford printing), Part 1, p. 152.

## 9.

### At Ohod

The Qureshites came out from the Battle of Badr with an astonishing result which they did not expect. They were confident of their capability to annihilate the Muslims easily. For the Qureshites were more numerous and with a bigger reserve and more logistics. Yet, they suddenly found themselves losing seventy of their warriors and leaders, along with seventy captives, in a one-day battle. And above all, the resounding defeat which they received was at the hand of a group whom they used to belittle.

The Qureshites were unwilling to admit a final defeat. They lost a battle, but they believed that they would never lose the war. All they needed was to mobilize forces to which the Muslims would not be able to stand. The burning hatred in the hearts of Qureshites and their desire to wash away the shame of the defeat at Badr and their eagerness to avenge their lost leaders added to their physical superiority a tremendous psychological strength.

The Qureshites mobilized for the battle of avenge three thousand fighters compared to nine hundred and fifty fighters at the Battle of Badr. This army was financed and its logistics were secured through the gross income of the commercial caravan which was allotted to the battle of avenge. Thus, the community of Quraish, one year after the Battle of Badr, marched towards Medina to annihilate the Muslims, their religion, and their Prophet. The Meccan army arrived at the area of Ohod which is five miles away from Medina. There, the expected battle took place.

The Holy Prophet went on deploying his forces, placing them in strategic positions. He placed fifty marksmen at

the slope of the Mount of Ohod, directing them to protect the back of the Muslims against the pagan cavalry (which was led by Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed). He commanded them not to leave their position whether the Muslims defeated the pagans or the pagans defeated the Muslims.

### *The Elements of the Islamic Defense*

In this second battle of destiny for the Muslims, the Islamic defense consisted of the same three important elements which played their roles at the Battle of Badr:

1. The ideal leadership of the Messenger and his firmness.

2. The members of the House of the Holy Prophet and their heroism.

3. An Islamic army consisting of seven hundred companions, the hearts of many of them were filled with faith and readiness for sacrifice.

The start of the Battle of Ohod followed the method of the beginning of the Battle of Badr. Talhah Ibn Abu Talhah (from Banu Abdul-Dar clan), the bearer of the banner of the pagans, challenged the Muslims, saying: "Are there any duelers?" The respondent to his call was the same respondent of the Battle of Badr. Ali came to him and when they faced each other between the two hosts, Ali swiftly dealt him a blow by his sword through which his head was split. The Holy Prophet was pleased. He exclaimed: "Allahu Akbar" (God Is Great), and so did the Muslims, for the biggest hero of the pagan army had died.

Abu Saad Ibn Abu Talhah (brother of Talhah) carried the banner and challenged the Muslims, saying:

"Companions of Mohammad, you allege that your dead go to Paradise and our dead go to Hell. By 'Al-Lat,' you lie. If you were so confident, some of you could have faced me. Let one of you come to fight me." (Dr. M. Haykal, *Life of Mohammad*, p. 289).

Ali came to him and Abu Saad was not luckier than his brother Talhah. The men of Abdul-Dar continued replacing the bearers of their banner with their men, and the

Muslims continued annihilating them. Ali destroyed Artat Ibn Sharhabeel, Shureih Ibn Qaridh and their servant, Sawab.

Historians reported that Al-Hamzah killed Othman Ibn Abu Talhah. Assim Ibn Thabit shot by his arrows Musafi, and Al-Harith, two sons of Talhah, Al-Zubeir killed their brother Kilab, and Talhah Ibn Obeidullah killed their other brother Al-Jallas.

### *Ali and the Banner Bearers*

However, Ibn Al-Atheer reported that Ali, alone, destroyed all the standard bearers at the Battle of Ohod and said that Abu Rafi reported that.<sup>1</sup> And so did Al-Tabari.

The death of the bearers of the banner heightened the morale of the Muslims and shook the hearts of the pagans. Following the death of the banner bearers, the Muslims undertook a general offensive led by Ali, Al-Hamzah, Abu Dujanh, and others. The Islamic offensive terrified the pagan army, but the Muslims lost during this operation a giant hero Al-Hamzah, Lion of God, and uncle of the Messenger of God. Wahshi, an Abbysinian, transfixing him with his dart while he was fighting. However, the pagans were forced to flee and leave their camps. The Muslims entered the pagan camps and went on collecting what they found of equipment and material without meeting any resistance from the pagans.

### *Defeat After Victory*

This scene watered the mouths of the fifty marksmen whom the Prophet placed at the slope of the Mount of Ohod to protect the back of the Muslims against the pagan cavalry. The majority of these marksmen left their place and joined the collectors of the spoils. They did not heed the word of their leader Abdullah Ibn Jubeir, who reminded them of the instructions of the Messenger which made it mandatory for them not to leave their place. Not more than

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1. Ibn Al-Atheer, Al-Kamil, Part 3, p. 107.

ten of them heeded his words. Noticing the small number of the marksmen, Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed and his horsemen killed them then started a general offensive.

The fleeing pagans beheld their horsemen fighting and attacking. They came back to the battle while the Muslims were preoccupied collecting the spoils.

The Muslims were astonished and confused. They started to fight but they did not know whom they were fighting. Many Muslims were killed by the Muslims themselves, then they fled turning their backs and refusing to look behind, while the Messenger was calling upon them to come back to the battle. The Holy Qur'an informs us of the situation of the Muslims in this terrifying hour:

“God certainly made good His promise unto you when you routed them by His leave, until the moment when your courage failed you and ye disobeyed after He had showed that for which ye long. Among you are some that hanker after this world and some that desire the Hereafter. Then did he divert you from your foes in order to test you. But He forgave you: For God is full of grace to those who believe. Behold ye were climbing up (the high ground) without casting a side glance at anyone, and the Apostle was calling you back. There did God give you one distress after another by way of requital, to teach you not to grieve for what ye miss, or for (the ill) that had befallen you. For God is well aware of all that ye do.”<sup>2</sup>

## WHO REMAINED WITH THE PROPHET?

The companions fled away, being concerned with their own safety. History recorded seven exceptional Meccans (Ali, Abu Bakr, Abdul-Rahman Ibn Ouf, Saad Ibn Abu Waqass, Talhah Ibn Obeidah, Al-Zubeir Ibn Al-Awam, Abu Obeidah Ibn Al-Jarrah); And Seven exceptional Medinities (Al-Hubab Ibn Al-Munthir, Abu Dujanah, Sahl Ibn Huneif, Assim Ibn Thabit, Saad Ibn Mu-ath, As-ad Ibn

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2. Chapter 3, verses 151-152.

Hudheir or Saad Ibn Abadah and Mohammad Ibn Musli-mah). These men, according to some historians, remained with the Prophet when the other companions deserted him.<sup>3</sup>

From what we read in Al-Mustadrak by Al-Hakim, we understand that Ali Ibn Abu Talib was the only defender who stayed with the Prophet for the duration of the battle. The other companions who were mentioned to be among those who remained with the Prophet were actually the first ones to come back to the Messenger of God after they left him. Al-Hakim recorded that Ibn Abbas said: "Ali has four distinctions no one shares with him: He was the first male who prayed with the Messenger of God. He was the bearer of his banner in every battle and he was the one who stayed with him at the Battle on the day of Al-Mihras (the Battle of Ohod, where there is gathered water called Al-Mihras), and he is the one who washed his blessed body and laid him in his tomb."<sup>4</sup>

Al-Hakim reported also that Saad Ibn Abu Waqass said: When people left the Messenger on the day of Ohod, I went aside and said to myself I shall defend myself . . . then Al-Miqdad told him: "Saad, this is the Messenger."<sup>5</sup>

Al-Hakim reported also that Al-Zubeir said about the Battle of Ohod, "And they exposed our back to the horse-men, so we were attacked from behind, and a man shouted: Mohammad has been killed. We retreated and the enemies pursued us."<sup>6</sup>

He also reported that Abu Bakr said: When people left the Messenger of God on the day of Ohod I was the first one to come back to the Messenger of God . . . then he mentioned in the hadith that Abu Obeidah Ibn Al-Jarrah followed him." (Al-Hakim, Al-Mustadrak, Part 3, p. 78).

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3. Al-Waqidi, Al-Maghazi, (conveyed by Ibn Abu Al-Hadeed in his Commentary on Nahjul-Balagah, Vol. 3, p. 388).

4. Al-Hakim, in his Al-Mustadrak, Part 3, p. 111.

5. Al-Hakim recorded it in Al-Mustadrak, Part 3, pp. 26-28.

6. Al-Hakim, Al-Mustadrak, Part 3, pp. 27-28.

### *The Prophet Participated*

The Messenger stayed at the battlefield with full determination and firmness after the pagans came up to him. He himself fought vigorously. Saad Ibn Abu Waqaas reported that he witnessed a man whose face was covered, and he did not know who he was. The pagans came towards him and Saad thought that they were going to overpower him. But that man took a handful of gravel and threw it at their faces and they retreated . . . Finally Saad discovered that that man was the Prophet.<sup>7</sup> He used his bow and expended all his arrows until his bow could not be used any longer.

When the Prophet was exposed to the enemies by the retreat of his army, Obay Ibn Khalaf tried to attack him. Some of his companions tried to bar Obay from reaching the Prophet, but the Prophet prevented them from doing that. He faced Obay with a blow which did not seem to be effective. But Obay said: "By God, Mohammad has killed me. . . ." He told me in Mecca: "I shall kill you. By God, if he spits on me he kills me." Obay died in "Saraf" while returning to Mecca.

### *Ali's Endeavor*

Al-Tabari reported that Abu Rafi said: The Messenger of God witnessed a group of pagans coming to him. He said to Ali: Charge them. Ali charged them and forced them to retreat and killed Amr Ibn Abdullah Al-Jumahi. The Prophet beheld another group coming and told Ali to charge them and he did. He scattered them and killed Sheibah Ibn Malik, one of the children of Amir Ibn Lu-ay. Amazed by Ali's sacrifice, Gabriel said: "Messenger of God, what a redeemer Ali is!" The Prophet replied: "He is from me, and I am from him." Gabriel said: "And I am from both of you."<sup>8</sup> They heard at that time a voice saying:

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7. This is reported also by Ibn Husham in his Biography of the Prophet, Part 2, p. 78.

8. Sayed Muhsin, Al-Ameen, in his Aayan Al-Shi-ah, Part 2, p. 195. Al-Fairoozbadi recorded this in his book: Fada-il Al-Knamsah, Part 2, p. 317 (conveying from Al-Tabari). And Ibn

“There is no youth (full of manhood) but Ali, and no sword comparable to Zulfiqar (Ali’s sword).

A regiment arrived from Kinanah in which four of the children of Sufyan Ibn Oweif were present: Khalid, Abu Al-Sha-atha, Abu Al-Hamra, and Ghurab. The Messenger of God said to Ali: “Take care of this regiment.” Ali charged the regiment, and it was about fifty horsemen. He fought them while he was on foot until he scattered them. They gathered again and he charged them again. This was repeated several times until he killed the four children of Sufyan and added to them six more. . . .<sup>9</sup>

Ibn Husham reported that the Messenger fell into one of the pits which were excavated and covered up by Abu Amir, who expected the Muslims to fall in them. The knee of the Messenger was cut. Ali held the hand of the Messenger and pulled him up and Talhah Ibn Obeidullah helped him until the Prophet stood up.<sup>10</sup>

Muslim in his “Sahih” (Authentic) reported that Sahl Ibn Saad said the following:

“The face of the Messenger was cut, and one of his teeth was broken, and the protective dress of his head was broken. Fatima, daughter of the Messenger, was washing the blood and Ali was pouring water he brought by his shield from Al-Mihras. Beholding that the water increased the flow of blood, she burned a mat, put some of its ashes on the wound and the blood stopped.”<sup>11</sup>

## THE CONCLUSION

It would not be difficult for the reader to infer the following:

1. The Battle of Ohod was one of the battles on which the future of Islam depended.

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Al-Atheer in his History, Al-Kamil, Part 2, p. 107, reported similar to this.

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9. Ibn Abu Al-Hadeed, in his Commentary on Nahjul-Balaghah, Vol. A, p. 372.

10. Ibn Husham, Biography of the Prophet, Part 2, p. 80.

11. Muslim, in his Sahih, Part 12, p. 148.



2. The death of the bearers of the banners of the pagan army at the beginning of the battle had its important effect in raising the morale of the Muslims and breaking the morale of the pagans who were four times more numerous than the Muslims. The bearers of the banners in the eyes of the warriors in those days were the leaders of the army. Their death had a great effect on the morale of the army. History recorded that Abu Sufyan said to Banu Abdul-Dar:

“O Banu Abdul-Dar, we recognize that you have more right than any other Meccan clan to carry the banner (because the Meccan tradition gives the clan of Abdul-Dar the right to carry the banner at war). We were defeated in Badr because of the banner. Hold your banner firmly and protect it or hand it to us.” This infuriated the clan of Abdul-Dar. As they refused to surrender their right of carrying the banner, Abu Sufyan said: “Let another banner be added to it.” They said: “Yes, but the additional banner will be carried also by a man from Banu Abdul-Dar, and nothing other than this will be accepted.”

The Meccan pagans witnessed at the beginning of the battle their banner fallen ten times, and their hearts fell with the banner ten times. They found, to their astonishment, that they are facing a tremendous power. Ali was the one who destroyed the banner bearers or most of them. This signalled the defeat of the Meccan army in the first round.

3. When the Muslims were defeated in the second round, no one remained with the Prophet except Ali and thirteen others of the companions of the Messenger. These thirteen were the first to come back to the Messenger after their flight. It is clear that Ali's defense in that decisive hour was much more valuable than the defense of the thirteen companions put together.

The Messenger of God became the target of the pagan's attacks. Whenever a regiment aimed at the Prophet, Ali charged the regiment and forced it to retreat.

Thus, we would not be erroneous if we say that Ali in

this decisive battle had the exclusive honor of being the main defender of the Messenger and his Message, against the forces which no one other than Ali could face successfully. The Battle of Badr laid the foundation of the Islamic state, but the Battle of Ohod was about to destroy the foundation, had not a small number of heroes headed by Ali been present.

The pagans found that the Battle of Ohod ended in their favor. They defeated the army of the Prophet, and the Muslims lost seventy companions, among them the giant hero: Al-Hamzah, uncle of the Messenger and Lion of God. But the pagan victory was not decisive. Their target was Mohammad and Mohammad was still alive. He was the biggest danger to them. Therefore, it was necessary for them to have another decisive battle in which they would realize the goal that they could not realize at the Battle of Ohod.

The Battle of Ohod took place during the third year after the Hijrah. Two years later, the third decisive battle in which the pagans gathered their biggest task force, took place.

## The Moat

The Qureshite community had one important dream: The destruction of Mohammad and his religion. Pagan tribes outside Mecca were sharing with them the same dream. Like the Meccans, these tribes considered Mohammad a serious menace to their religion. This belief brought these tribes and the Muslims into military confrontations in which the Muslims had the upper hand. These tribes, therefore, were like the Meccan community full of resentment and rancour towards Mohammad and his religion.

### *Non-Pagan Tribes*

There were clashes between the Muslims and some of the people of scripture who were neighboring Medina caused by their breaching of covenants with the Holy Prophet. Tribes from among them such as Banu Al-Natheer and others were exiled by the Prophet.

A delegation from these people went to Mecca and other Arab communities during the fifth year after the Hijrah, propogating war against the Prophet and attempting to mobilize the Arab forces for the proposed war. They did not need much effort to persuade the Meccans to a military undertaking against the Prophet. Their response to the invitation was prompt, and without hesitation, they mobilized four thousand fighters. This army was supplemented with six thousands from Ghatafan, Saleem, and other tribes. Thus, ten thousands strong marched towards Medina.

The Holy Prophet received the news of the imminent invasion a few days before their arrival at Medina. He

consulted his companions, and Salman Al-Farisi (the Persian) advised the Prophet to dig a moat around Medina to prevent the invaders from entering it. The Messenger commanded the Muslims (who were about three thousands) to implement the plan. The moat was dug within six days.

Witnessing the moat, the invaders were surprised and realized that it had become difficult for them to enter Medina. Thus they found it necessary to besiege Medina instead of invading it directly. Banu Quraidhah, a community from the followers of the Scripture, joined the pagan army after its arrival. This community had a covenant of peace with the Prophet. Their treacherous action was a frightening surprise to the Muslims. By breaching the covenant, this community gave the pagan army additional forces and equipment. It became the duty of the Muslims to add to their defensive lines another line.

### *The Muslims In Horror*

There were many hypocrites among the Muslims who circulated frightening rumors which added to the fear of the Muslims. The Holy Qur'an tells us of the psychological crisis with which the Muslims lived during that period:

“Behold! They came upon you from above you and from below you, and when the eyes grew wild and the hearts gaped up to the throats, and ye imagined various (vain) thoughts about God! In that situation the believers were tried: They were shaken with a mighty shock. And behold! The hypocrites and those in whose hearts there is a disease (even) say: God and His Apostle promised us nothing but delusion! Behold! A party among them said: O people of Yathrib (Medina), you cannot stand (the attack), therefore turn back! And a band of them ask for leave of the Prophet, saying: Truly our houses are bare and exposed though they were not exposed; they intended nothing but to flee.”<sup>1</sup>  
The pagan army, on the contrary, was enjoying an ex-

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1. Chapter 33, verses 10-13.

tremely high morale. Victory to them was certain. Medina was under their siege, and its inhabitants did not possess the courage to come out of it. Their confidence in victory and morale went higher when Banu Quraidhah joined them. This made them change their strategy from the siege of Medina to a direct invasion.

### *Amr's Venture*

Amr Ibn Abd Wodd, accompanied by Dhirar Ibn Al-Khattab, Akramah Ibn Abu Jahl, and others, sought and found a narrow place in the moat. Their horses leaped above the moat to the other side. Had this adventure succeeded many pagan fighters were expected to follow them and make it feasible for the whole army to pass through that narrow place, for they could have spanned the two sides of the ditch by filling that narrow gap with soil.

The Muslims were in a state of shock and horror before the passage of these pagan soldiers to their side. The new danger which was presented by their passage made the morale of the Muslims much lower than before.

### *Men of Strong Faith*

Though the hearts of most of the Muslims were filled with fear, some of them were unshaken by the new danger. It rather made their faith stronger in God, His Messenger, and the promised victory. These individuals were ready to sacrifice themselves and one of them certainly was determined to try to confine the danger, then to remove it. The Holy Qur'an tells us of the morale of these believers.

“When the believers saw the confederate forces, they said: This is what God and His Apostle had promised us. And God and His Apostle told us what is true. And it only added to their faith and their zeal in obedience.

“Among the believers are men who have been true to their covenant with God: Of them some have completed their vow (to the extreme), and some (still) wait; but they have never changed (their determination) in the least.”<sup>2</sup>

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2. Holy Qur'an, Chapter 33, verse 23.

The Holy Qur'an does not inform us of the number of those believers whose faith was increased by the increase of the danger. These believers may have been scores or just a few. However, faith sometimes remains only as a state of mind without being transformed into action. Some of the faith is active, flowing with vitality and moving the faithful to face the danger and to rise to its level and above its level.

The number of these distinguished believers remained unknown.

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### ALI'S RESPONSE

However, history informed us of one of them because of his outstanding achievements at this battle, in confining and removing the danger which shook the very foundation of the Islamic state. That man was no other than Ali Ibn Abu Talib.

Amr Ibn Wodd, who crossed the moat, was well known among the Arabs. He attended the battle, boastfully making his place known to people. His very passage from one side to the other side of the moat, accompanied only by a small number of fighters, indicates that the man was extremely courageous. He was the only one from among the ten thousand fighters who tried to invade the Muslims directly and challenge them totally while he was with them on one side.

The passage of Amr and his companions presented to the Muslims a new and serious danger and a frightening surprise which they never expected. The door was about to be opened widely, and hundreds and thousands were expected to follow. The surprise, however, did not frighten or astonish Ali. History informs us of Ali's present-mindedness and fast response, for he immediately moved to confine the danger, then to remove it. Leading a small number of believers, he went immediately to the point where the Islamic defense line was broken by the passage of Amr. He had his companions stand there, preventing others from attempting

to follow Amr.<sup>3</sup> And after he confined the new danger, he managed to remove it completely.

While mounting his horse, Amr went around the area of Sal'a, facing the Muslims and challenging them: "Is there any dueler?" He repeated this call but there was no response on the part of the companions. This compelled Ali to leave his place where he was deterring the pagan forces from following Amr by crossing the Moat. Responding to Amr's challenge, he left that place temporarily to be defended by the few who were with him.

He neared Amr and asked him to face him in a duel. Amr arrogantly replied: "Why, son of my brother (Amr was a friend of Abu Talib, father of Ali)? By God, I would not like to kill you." Ali replied: "But, by God, I would love to kill you." A short but extremely violent duel between the two heroes took place. Ali killed Amr immediately and Amr's companions ran away, trying to re-cross the moat from the Islamic side to the pagan side.

Ali exclaimed: "Allahu Akbar," (God is Great) and so did the Muslims. The death of Amr was the end of the new danger. Those who were with him ran away, trying to save their skin; but most of them were killed before they could cross to the other side.

Ali made a great contribution in the defense of Islam at this battle during which the danger against the new Faith reached its peak.

At this battle the Muslims faced a greater danger than ever before. The elements of the Islamic defense were the same three elements which played their roles during the two battles of Badr and Ohod: The firmness of the Messenger and his ideal leadership; the heroism of Ali; and the determination of the Islamic army.

A fourth element was added at this battle: The role of Salman Al-Farisi (the Persian) who counseled the Prophet to dig the moat around Medina.

The role of the Islamic army during the Battle of Ohod was smaller than its role during the Battle of Badr. And it

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3. Ibn Husham, Biography of the Prophet, Part 2, p. 224.

was less important at the Battle of the Moat than it was at the Battle of Ohod, for the Muslims during the Battle of the Moat did not even dare face the enemy. They only dug the moat around the city before the arrival of the pagan army then stood behind the moat until the end of the battle.

The roles of the first two defensive elements were similar to their roles at Badr and Ohod and probably bigger. The firmness of the Messenger, his leadership, his war strategy and his speed in digging the moat were most essential in making the Muslims pass the crisis safely.

Ali's role at this battle was outstanding in the history of the Islamic defense.

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### THE MAGNITUDE OF ALI'S CONTRIBUTION

It would not be logical to say that the Muslims were unable collectively to kill Amr, who could not by himself prevail against thousands of Muslims. But this was not the case. Amr was calling for a duel. A duel could only be between two persons. It was considered to be shameful for two men or more to have a duel with one man. Amr challenged all the Muslims to send one of them to have a duel with him. None of them was willing to face him except Ali.

Nor would it be logical to say that Amr was the entire power of the pagan forces, and that his death was a defeat for the whole confederate army. But it would be logical to affirm two important matters:

1. Ali's initiative to block the passage point and prevent others from following Amr had stopped the danger and confined it. Had the passage point remained open, a great number of the pagan soldiers would have followed Amr and their passage could have resulted in establishing a bridge between the two sides of the moat. Such a bridge would enable the whole army to cross.

One hour of negligence could have led to a decisive defeat of the Islamic army. This did not happen because Ali was fast in his response to the new danger, present minded, calm and collective and ready to deal with the serious crisis.



2. The death of Amr proved to the pagan army that they were unable to pass the moat again, and that what Amr could not accomplish could not be accomplished by others. By this the pagan army had to face one of two alternatives: Withdrawal, or continuation of the siege until the Muslims surrender or were forced to cross the moat and fight the pagans. The continuity of the siege of Medina was beyond the ability of the pagan army. It did not have the food supplies for ten thousand fighters and their horses and camels which could enable them to continue the siege for several months or weeks. In addition, a hurricane-like wind went on causing the pagan army many damages and making its life miserable. The hurricane was preceded by an argument between the pagans and their Jewish allies which made their co-operation in the battle highly difficult.

Thus, there was only one alternative for the pagan army to take after the failure of Amr and his death: The withdrawal, and that is what they did.

We ought not to forget an important matter! The death of Amr and most of his companions raised the morale of the Muslims. Their hope in continuity of life and in victory was revived. All this was a result of Ali's endeavor, and by this we can understand the meaning of the declaration of the Prophet. "The duel of Ali Ibn Abu Talib against Amr Ibn Abd Wodd at the Battle of the Moat outweighs the good deeds of my whole nation until the Day of Judgement."<sup>4</sup>

The Confederate Army withdrew and the Muslims passed the crisis safely. They regained their confidence concerning the future because of failure of the Confederate forces after their biggest mobilization. The Messenger said after their withdrawal: "After today, we shall invade them and they will not invade us."<sup>5</sup>

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4. Al-Mustadrak, Part 3, p. 32.

5. Ibn Husham, in his Biography of the Prophet, Part 2, p. 254.

## At Kheibar

Many non-pagan Arab tribes of the inhabitants of Hijaz refused to join the Faith of Islam. The faith itself prevented the Muslims from imposing it on the tribes, because they were from the people of the scripture.

At the dawn of the Islamic State in the beginning of the Hijrah, the Messenger signed a document by which he regulated the relationship between these tribes (around and in Medina) and the Muslims, giving them rights equal to those of the Muslims. In that document, the Holy Prophet wrote the following:

“Whoever joins the signatories of this scripture, would be entitled to our help and would not be subject to any injustice, nor should the Muslims cooperate against them. The children of Ouf are a community of believers. The people of the scripture are allowed to follow their religion as much as the Muslims are allowed to follow theirs, and so are their allies except the one who commits injustice or sin. For he does not harm but himself. The people of the scripture from Banu-Al-Harith and Banu Al-Shateebah have rights equal to that of Banu Ouf.

“The people of the scripture shall spend on themselves and the Muslims shall spend on themselves. They shall help each other against anyone that wages war against the people of this document. The signatories of the document are entitled to mutual advice, sincerity and assistance rather than fighting each other. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ibn Husham, Biography of Prophet, Part 1, p. 503.

This document is truly the first of its kind in the history of religious freedom and a cornerstone in declaring the human rights which mankind strove for centuries to acquire. I do not think any religious minority ever acquired such a security or rights under any government before the recent centuries.

This religious minority was expected to appreciate this generous attitude toward its faith. They should have taken such an attitude towards a religion that respects the message in which they believe and considers it heavenly with undiminished values. For the faith of Islam supports the messages of Jesus and Moses, and completes them.

This religious minority had forecast to its pagan neighbors an anticipated Prophet who is mentioned in its book. They used to threaten their pagan neighbors with the nearness of his advent and promise themselves to be of his followers. When the anticipated Prophet appeared and God showed them in him what they expected, they took a hostile attitude towards him and rewarded his tolerance with breaching all covenants they signed with him.

This religious minority evidently was expecting the new Prophet to share with them their hostile attitude towards the Messiah and his followers. When they found the Holy Qur'an spoke of the holiness of Jesus, his truthfulness and the purity of his mother, they turned against the Messenger.

Probably they did not like something else in Islam. This faith prohibits usury, and stands against exploitation and monopoly of the market. This frightened them, because it was their way to charge high interests on their loans to their neighbors. The anarchy which was prevalent in the Arabic Peninsula was a fertile land for them. They were able to move between the tribes, seeding and growing hostilities between them. Establishing a strong government with definite rules and regulations would deprive them of benefits they were enjoying.

This religious minority chose to join the pagan camp in order to keep the Arab nation in a state of ignorance,

poverty, and injustice, where people lacked security of life, honor, and property.

Like pagans, this minority did not like to see the Arab nation exercising its right of establishing a government unifying the Arab communities and directing them, along with other nations, to the Creator of the Universe.

This religious minority represented to the new Muslim State a menace equal to that of the pagan tribes. The reader may remember that a delegation from this religious minority was able to mobilize at the Battle of the Moat ten thousand fighters from Mecca and other communities through their war propaganda. You may remember also that Banu Quraidhah (from this minority) broke their covenant with the Holy Prophet. They joined his enemies when they witnessed the pagan army having the upper hand at that battle, maximizing the biggest crisis he ever faced.

The Messenger punished Banu Quraidhah severely after the withdrawal of the Confederate Army from around Medina. He made them pay dearly from their blood and wealth for their flagrant crimes.

However, the bulk of this minority was settling in Kheibar and its numerous fortresses which were about eighty miles from Medina. This community represented a danger to the safety of the Islamic State, and the time came to subdue these Kheiberites after the Messenger made his temporary truce with the pagan Meccans at Al-Hudeibeyah.

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## THE PROPHET BESIEGED KHEIBAR

When the Messenger came back from Al-Hudeibeyah, he stayed in Medina only fifteen days. Turning his attention to this minority, he marched towards Kheibar, accompanied by only the sixteen hundred volunteers who attended Al-Hudeibeyah. After traveling three days, he and his army camped around fortresses of Kheibar at night.

Leaving to their farms in the morning, the Kheiberites were shocked to see the Muslim army. They recoiled back, exclaiming: "Mohammad and the army."

It is worthy to note that this war was not religious. It

did not aim at forcing the people of Kheibar to adopt the Islamic Faith. The Holy Prophet never forced any of the followers of the scripture to change his religion. We have already mentioned that the document which was written by the Prophet during the first year of the Hijrah had secured to the religious minority inside and around Medina their religious freedom, along with their civil rights if they abode by the contents of the document. Unfortunately, they did not live up to the letter or spirit of that document. They, rather, became a menace to the safety of the State and freedom of the Muslims. Thus, the Messenger was duty-bound to try to subdue them.

The reader may remember that the elements of the Islamic defense in the previous three battles were three:

1. The ideal leadership of the Holy Prophet with all it possessed of unequalled firmness and wisdom along with his personality whose holiness commanded the obedience of every volunteer.

2. The heroic actions of the members of the House of the Prophet, and

3. The hundreds of sincere believers whose number was continuously on the increase.

You may remember that the Messenger lost a member of his clan, Obeidah Ibn Al-Harith at the Battle of Badr, then he lost his uncle Al-Hamzah at the Battle of Ohod. It is reported that the Messenger at the Battle of the Moat prayed to God to preserve Ali for him after He took from him Obeidah at Badr and Al-Hamzah at Ohod.

Ali attended the previous three battles and was the hero of every one of them. He was the first and the foremost among the fighters in both defensive and offensive actions. His actions in each of the three battles were essential factors in directing the course of the battle, bringing the battle to a good end, and extinguishing its flame.

Ali, however, was not able to be the first in leading the battle of Kheibar. For a health reason, he was absent at the beginning of the battle and his absence caused a noticeable vacuum. The Messenger laid siege around Kheibar and the siege continued for weeks without bringing any result.

Skirmishes between the two sides took place one day after another. The Muslims did not have the upper hand in those skirmishes.

The Muslims' supplies were dwindling rapidly. Because of this, the Muslims tried at the Battle of Kheibar to cook the meat of donkeys, but the Messenger prevented them from eating the meat.

The Messenger gave the banner to Abu Bakr. He led the army towards the fortress of Na-im. The Kheibarites came out and fought the Muslims and the Muslims could not prevail against them and were forced to retreat. The Messenger on the following day gave the banner to Omar and he was not luckier than Abu Bakr.

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### INDISPENSABLE MAN

The Messenger found himself facing a very serious problem. The siege had already continued more than it should. The food supplies dwindled and became scarce. The Islamic army so far was unable to subdue any of the fortresses. Should the Prophet continue his siege without result, or should he lift the siege against the fortresses and go back to Medina? This would be a monumental failure. If the reader were unable to evaluate the magnitude of Ali's endeavor in the previous battles, the Battle of Kheibar proves beyond a shadow of doubt that Ali's presence was indispensable in bringing the decisive battles to their favorable conclusions.

#### *Ali Is the Solution*

The Holy Prophet was saddened to see that his general offensive in two consecutive days had failed. He decided, therefore, to bring a drastic solution to the problem, and Ali's leadership was the only solution. The two sheikhs, Al-Bukhari, and Muslim, inform us in their two Sahihs (Authentics) of what took place. They recorded that Sahl Ibn Saad, (a prominent companion) said:

“The Messenger of God said at Kheibar: I shall give this

banner to a man through whom God will bring the victory. He loves God and His Messenger, and God and His Messenger love him.

“The companions spent the night asking each other: ‘Who is the man whom the Holy Prophet meant?’ They came in the morning to the Messenger and every one of them was hoping that he would be the man of the banner. “Where is Ali Ibn Abu Talib?” the Prophet asked. “He is suffering from inflammation of his eyes,” they said. The Prophet sent for him. When Ali was brought to the Prophet he treated Ali’s eyes with his blessed saliva and prayed for him. Ali’s eyes were cured instantly as if they did not have any inflammation.

The Prophet gave Ali the banner and Ali asked: “Messenger of God, shall I fight them until they become Muslims like us?” The Messenger said: “Go on, until you reach their dwelling. Invite them to Islam and inform them of their duty towards God and Islam. By God, if He leads one man through you to the right road, it would be better for you than to own a precious wealth.”<sup>2</sup>

### *The Unique Leadership*

Ali went on, carrying the banner, and contrary to the conventional way, he literally led the army. Salamah Ibn Al-Akwa said: “By God, Ali went out with the banner running and panting. We went following him until he planted the banner into a pile of stones near the fortress.” A man from the fortress went up and asked Ali: Who are You? And he replied: I am Ali Ibn Abu Talib. The man said: By what was revealed to Moses, you have the upper hand (the name *Ali* means high). As the Holy Prophet forecast, the Almighty granted Ali the victory. He conquered the enemy before he returned to the Prophet.”<sup>3</sup>

Salama also said: “Marhab (the outstanding warrior of the Kheiberites) came out boasting and challenging. Ali

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2. Sahih Al-Bukhari, Part 5, p. 171, and Muslim in his Sahih, Part 15, pp. 178-179.

3. Ibn Husham, Biography of the Prophet, Part 2, p. 335.

dealt him a blow with his sword, splitting his head, and victory was accomplished.”<sup>4</sup>

Abu Rafi, a companion of the Prophet said:

“We went with Ali Ibn Abu Talib when the Messenger of God sent him with his banner. When he came near the fortress, the dwellers of the fortress came out and he fought them. A man from them hit Ali and made him lose his shield. Ali took a door at the fortress and shielded himself with it. He kept it in his hand until the battle ended. I found myself with seven men trying to move that door, but we could not.”<sup>5</sup>

The retreating enemies took refuge in their fortress after a costly battle which did not last long after Marhab's death. They tried to defend themselves by entering into the fortress and locking its door after they lost the battle of confrontation. But this did not avail them. Ali opened the gate and entered the fortress and his soldiers followed him. How did he open the huge door? Did he or anyone of his soldiers climb above the wall and open the door from inside? Neither the historians nor the recorders of hadiths reported that the Muslims entered the fortress by climbing.

Had Ali, through an unusual power, dislocated the door as some of the hadiths reported? This is possible and very likely. For another miracle was performed by the Messenger of God on that day in curing the two eyes of Ali through the Messenger's blessed saliva. Dislocation of the door probably was an additional miracle which took place on that day. Probably the door which Abu Rafi informed us that Ali used as a shield was the same door of the fortress.

As Ali entered the fortress, he brought the defensive capability of the people of the fortress to an end. They could not win a second battle of confrontation after they lost the first one. The fortress fell at the hands of the Muslims before the rear of the army joined its front. Other fortresses followed the fortress of Na-im. They fell one

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4. Al-Hakim, Al-Mustadrak, Part 3, pp. 28-29.

5. Ibn Husham, Biography of the Prophet, Part 2, p. 335.



after another until the area of Kheibar completely surrendered to the Muslim State.

### *Conclusion*

The reader may easily come to the following conclusion:

1. The Battle of Kheibar was one of the important battles of destiny for the Muslims. It was preceded by two battles in which the Muslims were not in the best conditions. The Muslims were defeated at the Battle of Ohod and ran away from the battlefield except a few of them. This was followed by the Battle of the Moat in which the Muslims were on the defensive. They were frightened and terrified except those whom the Almighty fortified. Their hearts went up to their throats. The battle ended and the Muslims did not dare face their enemies or cross from their side to the side of the enemies. They remained behind their Moat.

The Muslims at the Battle of Kheibar outnumbered their enemies. Should they fail to subdue them, their failure was expected to show their weakness and entice many hostile tribes to attack the Muslims, and the Kheiberites will be the nucleus of the future invading forces. In addition, the Muslims themselves, because of their failure in Kheibar, will lose their self-confidence and see that their victory against their numerous enemies is a remote possibility. On the other hand, if the Muslims obtain victory against the Kheiberites, the opposite will be the result. Victory heightens their morale, eliminates a dangerous enemy and makes the rest of the Arab tribes respect the Muslims and hesitate to attack them.

2. The Messenger was unhappy with the sequence of events of the battle. The siege around the fortresses continued for a long time. The food supplies dwindled. If the siege continued and the Muslims could not prevail against the enemies, the Muslims would be forced to withdraw and lift the siege. This would be a disastrous failure. The Muslims, upon the order of the Prophet, therefore, conducted two general offensives in two consecutive days under the leadership of Abu Bakr then Omar.

As the Muslims were unable to conquer any of the fortresses in the two offensives, the Messenger realized that the Muslims were facing an unusual dilemma. He wanted a drastic solution for that problem.

3. Because Ali's leadership, in the view of the Messenger, was the only solution, the Messenger had to perform a miracle in order to enable Ali to fulfill his mission. Ali was suffering from inflammation of his eyes, and he would not be able to fulfill his difficult task unless his eyes were cured.

Had there been any other person capable of fulfilling the mission, the Prophet would not have commissioned Ali with it. Ali was excused from the duty of Jihad, because of his unusual condition, but the situation was so grave and there was no one other than Ali capable of facing the danger and prevailing against it.

### *Two Miracles*

4. The cure of Ali's eyes by the saliva of the Messenger was one of two miracles. The second miracle was the prophecy of the Messenger: He informed the Muslims that the one who would lead the army on the third day, would be able with the help of God to conquer the fortresses. The Prophet, as a human, could not predict that God would open the fortresses at the hands of Ali. It was possible for Ali to be killed or seriously wounded, and that would prevent him from continuing his campaign.

The Messenger did not utter his words in reliance on himself. He uttered them only in reliance on God's revelation. Only God knew what would happen to Ali and that he would come back after God opened the fortress at his hands.

*The whole army failed and was unable to conquer the fortress when Ali was absent. The presence of Ali alone was the key to victory. This would substantiate clearly that Ali was the main contributor after the Prophet in founding the Muslim State, for he was the implementer of the Prophet's strategy and the eliminator of his adversaries.*

To the truth of this statement, Omar, the Second

Caliph attested when he said to the man who accused Ali of being conceited: "A man such as Ali has the right to be proud. By God, the pillar of Islam could not be erected without Ali's sword. He is the highest magistrate of this nation, its earliest Muslim and its most honorable."

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## THE NATURAL MINISTRY

The Almighty strengthened His Messenger by his cousin Ali who pledged to him ten years prior to the Hijrah to be his Minister in his great mission. Had Ali not pledged to the Prophet at the clan's conference to be his "Wazeer" (minister), he would not have acted differently from what he did. The attachment of Ali to the Messenger was natural, requiring no pledge or pact.

He did not pledge to the Prophet his ministry and full assistance in order to gain the important ranks which the Messenger promised him. He gave his word because he believed that his assistance to the Messenger was the mission for which he was created. The love of God and His Messenger filled his heart, and therefore he gave all his existence for their pleasure.

### *A Divine Choice*

When the Messenger conferred on Ali the ranks of brother, executor and successor, he was speaking by the order of God, and God chooses for these ranks only the one who merits them.

The Holy Prophet, on the other hand, did not bestow upon Ali all these honors because of his promised assistance, but because Ali was meritorious.

Had the mission of the Messenger been in no need of Ali's endeavor and sacrifice, the Messenger would not have chosen a brother or an executor or a caliph other than him, for Ali was the most resemblant to the Messenger in ethics, righteousness and knowledge. He was the first Muslim and most obedient to God and His Messenger, and therefore, he was beloved by God and His Messenger. No

shining evidence beyond the declaration of the Holy Prophet at Kheibar is needed:

“I shall give the banner to a man through whom God will bring victory. He loves God and His Messenger, and God and His Messenger love him.”

Al-Termathi in his Sunan (one of the Six Authentics)<sup>6</sup> and Al-Hakim in his Al-Mustadrak,<sup>7</sup> reported that the Prophet was presented with a grilled bird. He prayed, and in his prayer he said: “God, send me your most beloved from among your creatures to eat with me this bird.” Ali alone came and ate with him.

Because Ali was the only qualified person to be the brother, the executor, and successor of the Holy Prophet, the Prophet bestowed the three honors upon him before the beginning of his monumental sacrifices. This proves that he was the choice of the Prophet for the above honors, regardless of the need of the message for his sacrifice.

When the Messenger conferred these ranks on Ali, the witnesses of the event did not exceed thirty or forty men. All of them were from the clan of the Prophet. It was only a matter of course for him to declare to the rest of the Muslims what he declared to the members of his clan when the opportunity presented itself. The Messenger chose to do that gradually. He started by announcing his brotherhood to Ali at the beginning of the Hijrah.

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6. Al-Termathi, in his Sunan, Part 5, p. 300 (hadith No. 3805).

7. Al-Hakim, Al-Mustadrak, Part 3, pp. 130-131.

## Announced Brotherhood

The nucleus of the Islamic State started at the beginning of the Hijrah. The birth of this state was a unique prototype in the history of man. We do not know before Islam any state that was established on a brotherhood springing from the belief in the oneness of God, and His universal justice which denies all clannish, national and racial discrimination. As a matter of fact, it is difficult to find in history a clear example other than the early Islamic State in which a government was established as a spontaneous outcome of people's sharing spiritual and worldly ideals.

However, this general brotherhood may remain an abstract idea if no tangible example of it is realized. The Messenger wanted to give the Muslims a tangible example through small brotherhoods, a special relation between two Muslims, in which each one becomes to the other a brother in God and treats the other as he treats his brother who was born from his parents. The Holy Prophet issued and announced individual brotherhoods during the first year after the Hijrah, but one was established ten years before the Hijrah. This was the one which he initiated between himself and Ali at the conference which took place at the Prophet's house in Mecca.

It is recorded in *Al-Seerat Al-Halabeyah*, that the Prophet issued a brotherhood between Abu Bakr and Omar; between Abu Bakr and Kharijah Ibn Zeid; between Omar and Atban Ibn Malik; between Abu Ruwaim Al-Khath-ami and Bilal; between Oseid Ibn Hudheir and Zeid Ibn Haritha; between Abu Obeidah and Saad Ibn Maath; between Abdul-Rahman Ibn Ouf and Saad Ibn Al-Rabi.

Then he held the hand of Ali Ibn Abu Talib, saying: This is my brother. Thus, the Messenger of God and Ali became brothers.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn Husham in his "Seerah" (Biography of the Prophet) reported the following:

"The Prophet, after the Hijrah said to the Muslims: Be brothers in God. Every two should be brothers. Then he held Ali Ibn Abu Talib's hand and said: This is my brother. Thus, the Messenger of God, the leader of the Messengers, the Imam of the righteous, the one who has no equal among the servants of God (he) and Ali Ibn Abu Talib became brothers. Al-Hamzah, Lion of God and of His Messenger and Zeid Ibn Haritha became brothers and Abu Bakr and Kharijah Ibn Zuhair became brothers. Omar Ibn Al-Khattab and Atban Ibn Malik became brothers. . . .<sup>2</sup>

This type of brotherhood may serve at least one of the two following purposes:

1. It substitutes the blood relationship with a spiritual relationship. When two persons are from two clans, tribes or communities, their brotherhood in principles and beliefs take the place of brotherhood by birth. This makes the two brothers in religion ready to co-operate in promotion of their religion. Both brothers become immune to hostility if some misunderstanding takes place between one of the two brothers and the relatives of the other.

The brotherhood between two persons from two tribes or clans makes each one of them a friend to the members of the clan or tribe of the other. Each one of the two brothers loves the other, and each has relatives with whom he reciprocates love. These relatives through this brotherhood become indirectly tied to the spiritual brother of their relative. Thus, the religious brotherhood becomes an extension of the blood relationship, and the blood relationship becomes an extension of the religious brotherhood.

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1. Ali Ibn Burhanudeen Al-Halabi, Biography of the Prophet, Part 2, p. 97.

2. Ibn Husham, Part 1, p. 505.

2. When it is by the Prophet's selection, this kind of brotherhood is an evidence of a mutual spiritual resemblance between the two brothers. The Prophet knew about his companions more than they knew about themselves. Two companions may not be aware of their spiritual resemblance as much as he is. Thus, when he makes two of them brothers, their brotherhood should enhance their co-operation and develop in proportion to their sincerity towards their religion.

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### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BROTHERHOOD

Looking at the brotherhood between the Messenger and Ali before and after the Hijrah, we find that their brotherhood does not serve the first purpose, namely: Creation of a close relationship between two persons from two clans, tribes or communities. The Messenger and Ali were not from two cities or tribes or clans. They were first cousins. The Messenger did not "brother" anyone before or after the Hijrah except Ali. From this, we can infer that the purpose of the brotherhood between the Messenger and Ali was to announce their mutual spiritual resemblance.

The brotherhood between the Messenger and Ali is a well known fact in the history of Islam. It was reported through many channels. This brotherhood was meaningful and highly important in the eyes of the Messenger.

Al-Hakim in his *Al-Mustadrak* reported in two ways that the Messenger of God said to Ali:

"You are my brother in this world and in the Hereafter."<sup>3</sup>

The Messenger came out while his face was glittering. Abdul-Rahman Ibn Ouf asked him: What is the good news? The Messenger said:

"A good tidings came to me from my Lord concerning my brother and cousin and my daughter. That God had married Ali to Fatimah."<sup>4</sup>

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3. Al-Hakim, in his *Al-Mustadrak*, Part 3, p. 14.  
Sharaful-Deen, *Al-Murajaat*, p. 130.

Again he said to Ali:

“You are my brother, my companion and my associate in Paradise.”<sup>5</sup>

He said to him on another occasion:

“As to you, Ali, you are my brother and the father of my children. You are from me and to me.”<sup>6</sup>

At another time the Messenger told Ali:

“You are my brother and my minister, you pay my debt, and fulfill my promise. . . .”<sup>7</sup>

When Fatimah was moved to the house of her husband, Ali, the Messenger said to Om Aiman:

“Call for me my brother.” She said (jokingly): He is your brother and you marry him your daughter?”

He said:

“Yes, Om Aiman. She called Ali for him and he came. . . .”<sup>8</sup>

When the Messenger was on his deathbed, he said:

“Call for me my brother. They called Ali and he came. He said: “Come close to me,” and Ali did. The Prophet reclined on Ali, and kept speaking to him until his holy soul departed his body.”<sup>9</sup>

These hadiths are only a few out of many others about the brotherhood of Ali to the Messenger. They clearly indicate that the Messenger chose him as a brother because he was next to him in purity and character. Ali should have been an unexpected choice. He was thirty years younger than the Prophet. Obviously he chose him because he was the only one who deserved this unique honor.

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4. Ibn Hajar, *Assawa-iq Al-Muhriqah*, p. 403 (conveyed by Sharaful Deen, *Al-Murajaat*, p. 130).

5. *Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi*, *Kanzul-Ummal*, hadith No. 6105.

6. *Al-Hakim*, in his *Al-Mustadrak*, Part 3, p. 217.

7. *Al-Tabarani*, in his *Big Majmaa of hadith* (conveyed by *Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi* in his *Muntakhab (Selected)* of *Kanzul-Ummal*, published on the margins of *Imam Ahmad's Musnad*, Part 5, p. 32).

8. *Al-Hakim* in his *Al-Mustadrak*, Part 3, p. 159.

9. *Ibn Saad*, *Al-Tabaqat*, Part 2, p. 263.



## THE SON-IN-LAW OF THE PROPHET

The Prophet bestowed a unique honor upon Ali, by choosing Ali to be his son-in-law. He married him to his daughter, Fatima Al-Zahra (the Lady of light), for whom her father testified that she is the leader of the women of Paradise, or the leader of the women of the believers.<sup>10</sup>

He also said: "Fatima is a portion of me, whoever exasperates her exasperates me."<sup>11</sup>

Ayeshah, wife of the Prophet, also said about Fatima:

"I have never seen a more resemblant to the Prophet in manner of speaking than Fatima, daughter of the Messenger of God. Whenever she came to him, he used to welcome her, stand for her, kiss her, take her hand and seat her in his place."<sup>12</sup>

Ayeshah said also about Fatima:

"I never witnessed a person truer than Fatimah after her father."<sup>13</sup>

Outstanding companions wooed the hand of Fatima, but the Prophet rejected them, saying: "I am waiting for a Directive concerning her." (He meant that he was waiting for an order from God.)

When Ali wooed her hand, the Prophet welcomed him, and Ali married her in the first year after the Hijrah. She was moved to him in the following year, after the Battle of Badr.

This marriage was destined to be unique in its consequences. Of its fruits were the two gems of this nation: Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein, about whom the Holy Prophet said: "An Angel came from Heaven to give me the good tidings: That Fatima is the leader of the women of Para-

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10. Al-Bukhari reported it through his channel to Ayeshah in his Sahih in the section of the Beginning of the Creation, in the chapter of the Evidences of the Prophethood, Part 5, p. 25.

11. Al-Bukhari, in his Sahih, Chapter of Virtues of the Relatives of the Messenger, and Virtues of Fatimah.

12. Al-Hakim, in his Al-Mustadrak, Part 3, p. 154.

13. Al-Hakim Al-Mustadrak, Part 3, p. 160.

14. Al-Termathi in his Sunan (of the 6 Authentics), Part 2, p. 306.

dise, and that Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein are the leaders of the youth of Paradise.”<sup>14</sup>

By their birth, the most honorable family was formed. For this family the Messenger ordered the Muslims to pray whenever they pray for him. This is the family whose members the Muslims are urged to follow.

### *The Divinely Commended Family*

In all of what the Holy Prophet spoke about Ali and the members of his family, he was speaking with a Divine authority and in reliance on the order of God and His revelation.

The Almighty revealed eighteen consecutive verses about the sacrifices of this family, its love of God, and the place of its members in Paradise.

Al-Wahidi in his book *Al-Baseet*; Imam Razi in his extensive commentary on the Holy Qur’an; Al-Zamakh-Shari in his *Kashaf* and Nizamul-Deen Al-Nisaboori in his commentary “Gara-Ibul Qur’an,<sup>15</sup> and Al-Shiblenji, in his book *Noorul-Absan*,<sup>16</sup> recorded that Ibn Abba said that:

Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein became ill. Ali and Fatima vowed to God the fast of three days of thanks if their two sons would be cured. The two sons also followed them in their vows, and so did their maid Fiddah. The two children were cured and the family fasted three consecutive days.

There was no food for the family in the three days except small amounts of barley bread. When the time of breaking the fast came (in the evening), a needy person came to their door, seeking food. The family gave him all they had. On the following evening, an orphan came asking for food and the family did what it had done the first night. On the third evening a captive came, asking for food. The family did what it had done the first two days. About this

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15. Nizamuddeen Al-Nisaboori, in his *Gharai-Ibul-Qur’an*, printed on the Margin of Al-Tabari’s Commentaries, on the Qur’an, Part 29, pp. 112-113.

16. Sayed Al-Shiblenji, *Noorul-Absar*, pp. 112-114.

event, the Almighty revealed the chapter of "Time" or "Man" in which we find the following verses:

"The righteous shall drink of a cup, whereof the mixture is Kafur, a spring wherefrom the servants of God drink, making it gush for them abundantly. They fulfill the vow and fear a day where the evil is wide-spreading. And feed with food for the needy wretch, the orphan, and the captive for love of God. (saying): We feed you for the sake of God only: We look for no reward nor thanks from you: we fear from our Lord a day of frowning and of fate. Therefore, God has ward-ed off from them the evil of that day, and has made them find brightness and joy. And has awarded them for all that they endured, a Paradise and a silk attire. . . ."17

It is worthy to note that no hadith ever mentioned that the members of this family said aloud to those whom they gave their food: "We feed you for the sake of God, looking for no reward, nor thanks from you." These words were in their hearts, not on their tongues, but God stated openly in His Book what they kept secretly in their hearts.

### *A Unique Testimony*

The Holy Qur'an does not contain any testimony of this kind pertaining to any other Muslim family. This is because no other family offered what this family offered of sacrifices.

We know of no other family that was so unselfish that all its members gave to others for the love of God their necessary food for three consecutive days.

This family however, was expected to surpass all other families in sacrifices. For Ali was the brother of the Messenger: his wife was the daughter of the Messenger; and their two children, by the testimony of the verse of "Mubalah," are called sons of the Messenger.

The members of this family were the ones whom the

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17. The Qur'an, Chapter 76, verses 5-12.

Messenger brought with him when the Almighty God commanded him to invite the Christian delegation of Najran for "Mubalah" (prayer by two opposite parties, asking God to punish their wrong side). Presenting them on that occasion was a shining evidence that they were the highest among the Muslims in righteousness, and presenting Ali particularly showed that the relation between the Messenger and Ali had passed the boundary of brotherhood and reached the degree of unity.

13.

## Ali's Place From the Prophet in the Qur'an

During the ninth year after the Hijrah, a Christian delegation from Nijran, Yemen, came to Medina to inquire about Islam and debate with the Prophet about religion. There was a dialogue between the Messenger and the delegation in which the Messenger stated the positive position of Islam towards the teachings of the Messiah. The delegation chose to stay on their negative position towards Islam. A revelation came to the Prophet, commanding him to invite the delegation to a prayer to be offered by both sides, asking the Almighty to bring down His punishment on the wrong side of the two parties. From the Holy Qur'an:

“And whoso disputes with thee concerning him (Jesus) after the knowledge which has come unto thee, say (unto them): Come! We will summon our sons and your sons, and our women and your women and ourselves and yourselves. Then we will pray humbly (to our Lord), invoking the curse from God upon those who lie.”<sup>1</sup>

The Messenger, in compliance with the revealed command, invited the Christian delegation for the prayer. Al-Nisaboori in his commentary on the Holy Qur'an, entitled: “Ghara-ib Bul-Qur'an and Aja-Ibul-Furqan,” recorded the following:

“The Messenger told the Christian delegation:

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1. Chapter 3, verse 62.

God has commanded me to call upon you to share with me a prayer for punishment. They said "Abu Al-Qasim" (the Prophet's code name), we shall think of the matter, then we will come to you." They had a conference headed by their counselor, Al-Aquíib. When they asked him his advice, he said: "By God, you have known that Mohammad is a Messenger of God. He told you the exact truth about your man, the Messiah. By God, whenever people challenge a prophet and share with him a prayer for punishment, their grown-ups will not last and their small ones will not grow. It will be your annihilation if you accept his challenge. If you insist on keeping your religion, make peace between you and the man and go back to your country.

"When the Christian delegation came back to the Messenger, they found him on his way to the proposed prayer, wearing a garment made of black hair, carrying Al-Hussein on his arm and leading Al-Hassan by his hand, with Fatima walking behind him and Ali walking behind her. The Prophet said to the four members of his family: "When I pray, say: 'Amen.'"

Looking at the Prophet and his family, the priest of the delegation said to his group: "Christians, I see faces whose prayer will be answered even for removal of a mountain. Accept not their challenge. If you do, you will perish and the Christians will not live on this earth."

The delegation heeded the warning of their priest and said to the Prophet: "Abu Al-Qasim," we have decided not to make prayer of "Mubalah" with you.<sup>2</sup>

Al-Tabari in his commentary on the Holy Qur'an reported many hadiths through various channels that the Messenger accompanied Ali, Fatima, Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein in the event of "Mubalah"<sup>3</sup>

Muslim in his Sahih recorded that Saad Ibn Abu Wa-

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2. You find it in Al-Nisaboori's Commentaries, on the Qur'an printed on the margin of Al-Tabari's Commentaries, Part 2, pp. 192-193.

3. Al-Tabari, in his Commentaries on the Qur'an, Part 2, pp. 192-193.

qass reported that after the revelation of the following verse:

“And whoso disputes with thee concerning him (Jesus) after the knowledge which had come to thee, say (unto them): Come! We will summon our sons and your sons, and our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves. . . .” The Messenger of God invited Ali, Fatima, Hassan and Hussein, then he said: “God, these are the members of my family.”<sup>4</sup>

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### WHY WAS ALI INCLUDED?

The Almighty commanded His Messenger to say to the delegation of Najran: “Come! We will summon our sons and your sons, our women and your women; and ourselves and yourselves. . . .”

In compliance with this command, the Prophet brought with him, Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein, because they were the sons of his daughter Fatima, and for this they are his sons. He brought Fatima with him because she represents the women from the members of his House. But why did he bring with him Ali who was neither from the sons nor from the women?

Ali has no place in the verse unless he is included in the word “ourselves.”

Bringing Ali with him indicates that the Messenger of God considered Ali an extension of his personality. By considering him so, he elevated him above all the Muslims.

The Messenger said on many occasions: “Ali is from me and I am from him.” Hubshi Ibn Janadah reported that he heard the Messenger of God, saying:

“Ali is from me and I am from him, and no one represents me but Ali.”<sup>5</sup>

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4. Muslim, in his Sahih, Part 15, p. 176.

5. Ibn Majah in his Sahih (hadith No. 143).

A dialogue between the Imam Ali Al-Ridha and Al-Ma-Moon (a prominent Abbaside caliph) went as follows:

Al-Ma-Moon: "What is the evidence on the caliphate of your grandfather (Ali)?"

The Imam Al-Ridha: The evidence is the word of God, "and ourselves and yourselves." The Imam meant that by bringing the Imam with him in the event of "Mubahalah," the Messenger made him an extension of himself; and whoever is an extension of the personality of the Messenger would be the Imam of the Muslims.

Al-Ma-Moon: This would be true if there is not "our women and your women."

Al-Ma-Moon meant that it is possible that there were among the Muslims other men who were like Ali in being an extension of the personality of the Holy Prophet, but he did not want to bring all of them. He chose to bring one of them, Ali, as a representative of his equals. The evidence of this is the word "Our women," since this word includes all women who are related to the Holy Prophet by birth or marriage. But the Messenger brought only one of them, Fatima, who is related to him by birth as a representative of the women who are related to him.

The Imam Al-Ridah: This would be true, if there were not the words: "And our sons and your sons." He meant that Fatima was brought as the unequalled woman rather than a representative of her equals in the family of the Prophet. Had other women been equal to Fatima, the Holy Prophet would have brought them with her. For he brought Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein together, because they were equal to each other, and did not bring one of them as a representative of his sons. Therefore, presenting Ali on this occasion is an evidence that Ali is the only one whom the Prophet considered to be an extension of his personality.

It is reported that Amr Ibn Al-Auss asked the Prophet: "Who is the most beloved to you from men?" The Messenger said: Abu Bakr. Then he asked him: "Who is next?" And the Messenger said: Omar. Ibn Al-Auss said: "Then where is the place of Ali?" The Prophet turned his face to



the people around him, saying: "This man is asking about the self."<sup>6</sup>

I have mentioned in the last chapter that the Messenger's declaration after the Hijrah was not a fulfillment of a promise he made to Ali before the Hijrah, for he fulfilled his promise to Ali by "brothering" him on the day of the conference which took place at his house. Furthermore, he did not promise Ali with such a declaration to be made in the future.

The Holy Prophet announced that to the Muslims voluntarily, because Ali deserved the unique honor and because its announcement might prepare the Muslims psychologically for the leadership of Ali in the future. He wanted to show the nation the guiding Minaret which the nation would need after the Prophet.

As the Messenger announced to the Muslims the unique honor which he bestowed upon Ali by "brothering" him, he was expected to announce publicly the other two high honors which he conferred on him: of being his executor and successor. For what the nation needed more than anything else was the good leadership to which it might resort after the Messenger. Such a leadership is what could secure the continuity of the Islamic Message in its purity. It could also secure the nation against deviation from the right road in its long future.

The Messenger chose to announce this leadership during the tenth year after the Hijrah when he was performing his valedictory pilgrimage. He declared to the thousands of pilgrims that Ali had the right to administer the affairs of the Muslims as much as the Prophet had. This meant that the Prophet had declared that Ali was to be his successor. It also implied executorship, for whomever the Prophet appointed to administer the affairs of the Muslims would be his executor also.

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6. Almuttaqi Al-Hindi, *Kanzul-Ummal*, Part 15, (virtues of Ali), p. 125 (hadith No. 361).

## The Moula of the Muslims

The tenth year after the Hijrah was full of important events. Two of those events were outstanding and pointed to the Messenger's belief in the nearness of his death and that he was about to be summoned by God and that he would respond.

The Messenger announced to the inhabitants of the Arabic Peninsula that he would perform the duty of pilgrimage. He urged them to accompany him during the days of his journey to learn from him the manner of its performance; and being concerned with the future of the Muslims, he wanted to recommend to them what a Prophet recommends to his followers to do in the future, for he thought that they would not see him in a future year.

Tens of thousands of pilgrims hastened to join the Holy Prophet. He went on, leading them in their "Ihram," circumnavigating the Kaaba, praying, walking between Safa and Marwa; and at the sojourn at Arafat and at the time of their sacrifices.

They followed him and did what he ordered them to do. He addressed them while they were on Arafat, and his Message was most impressive. He announced to them at the beginning of his sermon the nearness of his death when he said after he prayed to the Almighty:

"O people, listen to my words, for I do not know if I will meet you after my present year at this place at any time. . . ."

Then he spoke to them about the sanctity of the human blood and Muslim's properties, saying:

**“O people, certainly your lives and properties are as sacred to you as your present day and your present month until you meet your Lord. And you shall meet your Lord and He will ask you about your deeds, and I have delivered the Message.”<sup>1</sup>**

The Holy Messenger went on urging people to discharge their trusts and declaring that every usury is prohibited. Islam prohibits retaliation for blood that was shed during the pre-Islamic days. He also reaffirmed the right of women and re-emphasized Islamic brotherhood.

The main concern of the Messenger was the future of his nation. As he was fully aware of the crises which the nation would go through, he was expected not to leave the nation without a minaret of guidance through which people could pass the future crises safely. The Prophet, therefore, declared to the Muslims what he considered to be a security against deviation from the right road, if they chose to have that security.

Al-Termathi in his Sahih reported through his channel to Jabir Ibn Abdullah Al-Ansari, that he said: “I have seen the Messenger of God in his pilgrimage on the day of Arafat while he was riding his female camel (Al-Quswa), delivering a sermon, and I heard him saying: O people, I have left among you that which if you uphold, you will never go astray: The Book of God and the members of my House.”<sup>2</sup>

By these words the Messenger announced to his nation that he left for it what would be a security against deviation from the right road if the nation would take what he left for it. That security is composed of two harmonious elements: One of them is the revelation of God which is recorded in the Holy Qur’an, and the second is the members of the House of the Prophet who have the knowledge of the interpretation of the Holy Qur’an and the teaching of the Holy Prophet.

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1. Ibn Husham, *Biography of the Prophet*, Part 2, p. 6.

2. Al-Termathi, in his Sahih, Part 5, p. 328, Al-Termathi said also that Abu Tharr, Abu-Sa-eed (Al-Khidri), Zeid Ibn Arqam, and Hutheifa Ibn Oseid reported what agrees with this.

It is worthy to note that masses of the Muslims do not know these reported words of the Holy Prophet, yet these words were reported by about twenty companions. What the Muslim masses know is what Ibn Husham recorded in his *Biography of the Prophet*, that the Prophet said in his sermon on Arafat: "I have left among you what if you fortify yourselves with, you will never go astray: The Book of God, a clear order, and teaching of His Messenger."

Furthermore, these Muslims think that there is a contradiction between the first and the second hadiths.

It should be known that the reporters of what Ibn Husham recorded are not known. Their names are not recorded in the hadith; therefore, it should not be considered authentic. It should be noted also that Al-Bukhari and Muslim did not record in their report of the sermon of the Prophet on the day of Arafat the word "Sunnat Nabyeh" (the teaching of His Prophet). The two sheikhs mentioned only the Book of God.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, the Book of God is well known to the Muslims, and it was recorded during the days of the Messenger. The "Sunnah" (teachings of the Prophet), on the other hand, was not recorded during the days of the Prophet, and what was written of the hadiths, decades after him, is not completely a place of agreement among the Muslims.

There are many contradictory hadiths contained in the books which we call Sahihs. It is recorded, for example, in some of the Sahihs that Abdul-Rahman, Ibn Abu Omeirah reported that the Prophet prayed for Muaweyah, saying: "God, make him well-guided and make him lead people to the right road." It is also reported in a Sahih that the Messenger said to Ammar Ibn Yasir: "Ammar, be cheerful, the aggressor party will kill you."

Yet the party that killed Ammar was the party of Muaweyah. When Muaweyah is the head of the aggressors

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3. Al-Bukhari, Sahih Al-Bukhari, Part 5, p. 224. Muslim in his Sahih, Part 8, (Book of Pilgrimage), p. 184 reported the hadith without mentioning the "Sunnah" (The Teaching of the Prophet).

he would not be well-guided, nor could people be led through him to the right road.

A hadith commending a man such as Muaweyah cannot be a security against deviation. It would be, rather, a cause of confusion. A man that waged against Ali, the Imam of the truth and the brother of the Prophet, a war in which tens of thousands of Muslims were killed, cannot be a guide to the right road.

To make what Ibn Husham reported logically acceptable, we have to understand from the word "Sunnah," the statement of the Prophet and his actions which are known to have come from him. These represent a security against deviation if we follow them. But that which is known of his statements and actions are very little, because most of the hadiths were not reported by numerous reporters in every link of its chain of narration; they were rather reported by one or two or a few reporters. Many of these hadiths contradict each other. Therefore, we cannot acquire certainty through those hadiths about what the Messenger said or did.

There is only one logical way through which we can be certain of Sunnah of the Prophet: The Prophet himself could inform us of a reliable source through which we know exactly what he said and did. The first hadith, which was reported by more than twenty companions, informs us of that reliable source, namely: the members of the House of the Prophet who knew the interpretation of the Book of God and the instructions of the Messenger completely. By this the hadiths of Al-Termathy and Ibn Husham would be agreeing with each other and explaining one another.

Ali possessed the knowledge of the Qur'an and the words and the deeds of the Prophet and their interpretations. The Muslims could have avoided deviations if they were to follow his interpretation and assist him in communicating his knowledge to the nation.

However, the other outstanding event which took place during the last year of the life of the Messenger has made this matter crystal clear. The event was fully expressive concerning the elements of security against deviation.

That outstanding event was the Messenger's Declaration at Ghadeer Khum. While he was coming back from the valedictory pilgrimage to Medina, he stopped at that place to tell the thousands of pilgrims who were accompanying him that Ali Ibn Abu Talib is the "Moula" (guardian) of every believer.

Al-Hakim through his channel to Abu-Tufail reported that Zeid Ibn Arqam said: "When the Messenger of God was coming from the Valedictory pilgrimage, he stopped at Ghadeer Khum. He ordered the pilgrims to sweep what was under the trees at that place. Then he said: 'I am about to be summoned by God and I shall respond. I am leaving among you the two valuables. One of the two is bigger than the other: The Book of God and my Itrah (members of my house). Beware how you shall treat them after me, for they shall not part with each other until they join me on the Day of Judgement.'" Then he said: "Certainly God is my "Moula" (Guardian) and I am Moula of every believer. Whoever I am his Moula this Ali is his Moula. God, love whoever loves him and be hostile to whoever is hostile to him."<sup>4</sup>

From this we understand that the Messenger wanted to declare to the Muslims at that stand three important matters which are related to each other:

1. He was expecting to depart from this world soon. Therefore, he spoke to them as if he had been summoned by his Lord.

2. As he was about to meet his Lord, he viewed it mandatory to have for his followers a means of guidance which would illuminate for them the road after the Heavenly revelation ceased by his absence. Therefore, he declared to them that he was leaving to them the Book of God and his "Itrah" (the members of his House); and that if they follow the Book and the "Itrah," they guarantee for themselves the continuation on the clear road in their near and remote future.

3. The members of the House of the Holy Prophet were

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4. Al-Hakim, Al-Mustadrak, Part 3, p. 109.

to lead the nation only because they were unequaled in their knowledge of interpretation of the Book and the instructions of the Messenger and their adherence to both of them. The Messenger wanted to declare to the nation that the man who had all qualifications for that leadership from among his close relatives was Ali Ibn Abu Talib. Therefore, he put him in his own place and made him his own replacement. God is the Guardian of the Messenger and the Messenger is the guardian of the believers. He has the right to administer the affairs of the believers more than the believers have to administer their own affairs, and Ali is the one who has a right equal to that of the Prophet in leading the Muslims and administering their affairs.

The Messenger was fully aware that people differ in memorizing what they hear and in understanding what they memorize. Therefore, he was expected to record in a special document what he verbally declared at Ghadeer Khum, leaving no excuse for anyone to argue in the future about the contents of the Declaration. But he did not do that. History does not inform us of any document dictated by the Messenger and sealed by his blessed seal, declaring that he had chosen Ali or any other person for the leadership of the nation after him. What is the reason for the absence of such a document?

We shall find the answer in the following pages.

## Unfulfilled Will of the Prophet

The Prophet did not leave a written will, though the Holy Qur'an commands every Muslim to make a will:

“It is prescribed, when death approaches any of you, if he leaves any valuables, that he makes a bequest to parents and closest kins, in the legitimate way. This is a duty of every righteous; If anyone changes the bequest after hearing it, the guilt shall be on those who make the change. For God hears and knows (all things).”<sup>1</sup>

Although the verse speaks of the imperativeness of willing without specifying a method, the Prophet commanded the Muslims to make their wills in writing. Muslim in his Sahih recorded the following:

“Abu Salim reported that the Messenger said: ‘A person who has something which he may will, has no right to stay three nights without his written will.’ ”

Abdullah Ibn Omar reported that the Prophet said: “A person that has something to will has no right to stay two nights without his written will.”

Muslim reported also that Abdullah Ibn Omar said: “Since I heard this from the Messenger of God, I never stayed one night without my written will.”<sup>2</sup>

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1. The Holy Qur'an, Chapter 2, verses 180-181.

2. These three hadiths are recorded by Muslim, in his Sahih, Part 11, (*The Book of Will*), pp. 74-75. The second of them is also recorded by Al-Bukhari, in his Sahih, Part 4, p. 3.



The Prophet had the right to delay his will for days, months and years, because he exceptionally was on an appointment with his Lord. It is highly probable that he was Heavenly informed that he would not die until the religion of Islam was completed. However, during the tenth year after the Hijrah, at the completion of his Valedictory Pilgrimage the following verse was revealed:

“Today I have completed your religion for you, and perfected my favor upon you and chosen Islam as a religion for you.”<sup>3</sup>

By this revelation, the Prophet felt the nearness of his death, and that it was about time to make his will.

Thus, on his way back to Medina from his pilgrimage, he stopped at Ghadeer Khum to make an important declaration in which he said:

“I am only a mortal human. The Messenger of my Lord is about to come to me and I shall respond (to His invitation by departing from this world).”

Then he declared that Ali, like the Prophet, has more right to the believers than the believers have to themselves, and that Ali is the Guardian of every believer (See Chapter 14).

### *A Written Will Is Necessary In Important Matters*

Although a verbal will is valuable, a written will is indispensable, particularly in an important matter such as appointing a successor to lead a nation. A verbal statement can be forgotten, increased, decreased, or inaccurately conveyed. But a written will sealed by the Prophet is difficult to change. The Prophet, therefore, was expected to make such a will, but he did not.

It is said that he verbally told the Muslims to follow the Book of God and the precepts of His Prophet, and this was a sufficient will. I disagree for the following reason:

A will by the Prophet is expected to give the Muslims

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3. The Holy Qur'an, Chapter 5, verse 4.

some fresh instructions dealing with the future of the nation after his death. Adherence to the teaching of the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet is not of this kind, because its imperativeness is self-evident to the Muslims, and because obedience to God and His Messenger is repeatedly recorded in the Holy Qur'an:

“O you who believe, obey God and obey the Messenger. . .”<sup>4</sup> “Take whatever the Messenger brought to you. And avoid whatever he prohibited for you. . .”<sup>5</sup>

An unwritten statement by the Prophet cannot be as effective as a Divine word repeatedly recorded in the Book of God. Therefore, such a statement, dealing with such a self-evident subject cannot be the expected will of the Prophet.

The Prophet is expected more than anyone in the nation to comply with the command of God as stated in His Book and to do what he himself ordered his followers to do. If Ibn Omar or any other Muslim has to write a will because he has a little wealth to will and a small family to take care of, the Prophet had the final Heavenly message to secure and a whole nation to protect and direct.

### *Expected Crises Required Written Will*

The faith of Islam was still a new plantation the roots of which were not yet deepened in the soil of the Arab Society, and the dangers against the faith were numerous. We all know that a civil war took place after the death of the Prophet because of the apostasy of the majority of the inhabitants of Arabia.

The Prophet was fully aware of those dangers. Al-Hakim in his Sahih Al-Mustadrak reported that Abu Muwaihbih, a companion of the Messenger, said:

“The Messenger of God has told me: ‘I have been ordered (by God) to pray for the people of Al-Baqee (a cemetery of Medina), for forgiveness.’ ‘Come with

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4. Chapter 4, verse 59.

5. Chapter 59, verse 7.

me.' I went with him. When he stood in the midst of the graves he said: "Peace be upon you, people of cemeteries. Congratulations to you for what you are in. You do not know what God has saved you from. The faith-testing trials are coming as pieces of a dark night, one follows another. . . ."6

### *Abu Bakr Left a Written Will*

We cannot conceive that the Prophet was less concerned with the future of the nation than his companion Abu Bakr who did not depart from this world before he appointed his successor (Omar). He did that in spite of the fact that the nation by the time of his death had passed the crisis of the civil war and reached an internal peace. He did that because he knew that leaving the Muslims without appointing a leader would be a negligence of their interest and a peril to their future.

### *A Dialogue Between Omar and His Son*

It is worthy to note the wisdom of Abdullah Ibn Omar in his dialogue with his father as the latter was dying:

Abdullah: "You should appoint a successor."

Omar: "Whom should I appoint?"

Abdullah: "You try your best. You are not their Lord. Suppose you temporarily recall the caretaker of a land of yours. Would you not like him to have a successor during his absence until he goes back to the land?"

Omar: "Yes."

Abdullah: "Suppose you recall the shepherd of your sheep. Would you not like him to have a successor until he goes back to the sheep?"7

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6. Al-Hakim, in his *Al-Mustadrak*, Part 3, pp. 5-6. Ibn Husham also reported this hadith in his *Biography of the Prophet*, Part 2, p. 642. Ibn Saad also reported in his *Al-Tabaqat*, Part 2, p. 204.

7. Ibn Saad, *Al-Tabaqat*, Part 3, p. 343. Muslim in his *Sahih* also reported what is similar to this, Part 12, p. 206.

Although Omar refused to appoint a successor, he did the equivalent. He chose six companions of the Prophet. He gave them the right to choose a caliph from among themselves. He ordered them to follow their majority if there were a majority. He ordered them to follow the party of Abdul-Rahman Ibn Ouf when the six were equally divided. Thus, he did not leave the Muslim nation without a directive. He defined a method by which a caliph would be selected.

### *The Prophet Regularly Left Successors In His Absence*

And the most amazing thing in this matter is that the Prophet used to appoint a successor whenever he left Medina for a few days or weeks:

When he left for Badr, he appointed *Abu Lubabah*.

When he left for Doumat Al-Jendal, he appointed *Ibn Arfatah*.

When he left for Banu Quraidhah, he appointed *Ibn Om Maktoom*. He appointed him also when he left for Thee Qirad.

When he left for Banul-Mustalaq, he appointed *Abu Tharr*.

When he left for Kheibar, he appointed *Numailah*.

When he left for Omrat Al-Qadha, he appointed *Ibn Al-Adhbat*.

When he left for Mecca, he appointed *Abu Raham*.

When he left for Tabuk, he appointed *Ali*.

When he left for the Valedictory Pilgrimage, he appointed *Abu Dujanah*.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, he constantly appointed successors whenever he planned to leave Medina. Yet, when he left his nation forever, he did not leave a document of succession!!!

### THE PROPHET WAS PREVENTED FROM WRITING A WILL

The absence of a written will by the Prophet is aston-

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8. Ibn Husham, *Biography of the Prophet*.

ishing indeed. There must have been an unusual cause that prevented the Prophet from writing a will!

However, when we review the records of the events of the final days of the Prophet, we find that the Messenger wanted to write a will, but he could not make it. Al-Bukhari recorded in his Sahih that Ibn Abbas reported:

“When the ailment of the Prophet became serious, he said: ‘Bring me a writing sheet, I will write to you a directive after which you will not go astray.’ Omar said: ‘The Messenger is overwhelmed by his ailment (does not know what he is saying). We have the Book of God. It is sufficient to us.’ They (those who were present) disputed with each other vehemently. He (the Messenger) said: ‘Go away, and no dispute should take place in my presence.’ Ibn Abbas went out, saying: ‘The tragedy, the whole tragedy is what barred the Messenger of God from writing his document.’”<sup>8</sup>

Muslim in his Sahih, recorded that Sa-eed Ibn Jubeir reported that Ibn Abbas said:

“The day of Thursday, and what a day of Thursday.” Then he wept until he moistened the ground with his tears. I said: ‘Ibn Abbas, what is the day of Thursday?’ He said: “The Messenger became seriously ill and said: ‘Bring me a writing sheet to write to you a directive, so you will not go astray after me.’ They disputed, and disputes should not take place in the presence of the Prophet. And they said: “What happened to him? Did he hallucinate? Ask him.” He said: ‘Go away, what I am in is better (than what you think of). I enjoin on you to do three things: Drive the pagans out of the Arabian Peninsula, give the delegations (of various tribes who will visit Medina) as much as I used to give them.’ Sa-eed said: “He (Ibn Abbas) kept silent on the third one, or he said it and I forgot it.””<sup>9</sup>

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8. Al-Bukhari, Sahih Al-Bukhari, Part 1, p. 39.

9. Muslim, in his Sahih, Part 11 (at the end of the *Book of Will*) p. 89. Ibn Saad also recorded it in his Al-Tabaqat, Part 2, p. 242. And so did Imam Ahmad in his Musnad, Part 1, p. 222.

Obeidullah Ibn Abdullah Ibn Utabah said that Ibn Abbas reported:

“When the Messenger of God was about to die, Omar Ibn Al-Khattab was among the men who were present at his bedside. The Messenger said: ‘Bring me a writing sheet. I will write to you a directive after which you will not go astray.’ Omar said: ‘The Messenger of God was overwhelmed by ailment. You have the Holy Qur’an. The Book of God is sufficient for us.’ Those who were present disagreed with each other and disputed. Some of them said: ‘Bring the Messenger what he needs. He will write to you a directive after which you will not go astray.’ Some of them said what Omar said. When they shouted excessively and disputed in the presence of the Messenger, he said: ‘Go away.’ Ibn Abbas used to say: ‘The tragedy, the whole tragedy was their argument and dispute which barred the Messenger of God from writing to them that directive.’<sup>10</sup>

Ibn Saad in his *Al-Tabaqat* recorded that Jabir Ibn Abdullah Al-Ansari reported:

“When the Messenger was in his sickness by which he died, he called for a sheet to write on it to his nation a directive (after which) they will not go astray, nor will they be misled. There was at the house arguments and excessive talk. Omar Ibn Al-Khattab spoke and the Prophet refused it.”<sup>11</sup>

It is also recorded in *Al-Tabaqat*, that Omar Ibn Al-Khattab reported:

“We were with the Prophet, and there was a screen between us and the women. The Messenger of God said:

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10. Muslim in his *Sahih*, Part 11, p. 95. Similar to this is recorded by Ibn Saad in his *Al-Tabaqat*, Part 2, p. 244. Imam Ohmad also recorded it in his *Musnad*, Part 1, p. 336.
  11. Ibn Saad recorded it in his *Al-Tabaqat*, Part 2, p. 242. Similar report by Jabir is recorded in the same Part 2, p. 244. In this report Jabir said: “They excessively talked at the presence of the Prophet until he refused it.”

'Bring me seven skins filled with water (to pour them on his body in order to cool his fever), and bring me a sheet and an inkwell. I will write to you a directive after which you will not go astray.' The women said: 'Bring the Messenger what he needs.' Omar said: "I said to them: Be silent. You are his female companions. If he becomes ill you squeeze your eyes; if he is cured, you hug his neck.' The Messenger of God said: They are better than you.'"<sup>12</sup>

It is also recorded in Al-Tabaqat, that Zeinab, the wife of the Messenger, said to them:

"Do you not hear the Prophet, trying to write a directive for you?" They argued, and the Prophet said: "Go away."<sup>13</sup>

### THIS UNUSUAL EVENT RAISES MANY QUESTIONS

1. Why did Omar oppose the Messenger and lead the opposition against writing his will?
2. What was the Prophet trying to write in his will?
3. Why did the Prophet not write his will in spite of Omar's opposition?
4. How can his directive become a security to the nation against straying?

Some scholars say that Omar opposed the Prophet's will out of compassion. The Prophet was dying and he was extremely tired. Writing a directive at such a time increases his tiredness. Omar did not want the Prophet to over-burden himself at such a time.

It is evident that this explanation is erroneous. When was it permissible for a Muslim to prevent another Muslim, commoner or great, from writing his will while he is about to die? Writing a will is one of the religious duties which every Muslim is supposed to fulfill before he (she) dies.

You have already read that Abdullah Ibn Omar reported that the Messenger said: "A person that has some-

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12. Ibn Saad, Al-Tabaqat, Part 2, pp. 243-244.

13. Ibn Saad, Al-Tabaqat, Part 2, p. 244.

thing to will has no right to stay two nights unless his will is written.”

The duty of every Muslim, especially a prominent one such as Omar, is to assist his Muslim brother in fulfilling his religious duty rather than to prevent him from achieving it. Omar and all those who were present at that hour had a manifold duty towards the attempted will of the Messenger.

The Messenger was not only a Muslim, he is the Prophet of the Muslims and the founder of the faith. It was the duty of Omar to offer him all assistance to fulfill his duty.

It was also the duty of Omar to assist the Prophet in writing his will because the Messenger stated that his will represents a security to the nation against straying. The Messenger was always truthful. When his will represented such a security, it would be the most imperative duty of Omar, as an outstanding Muslim and sincere towards the nation, to welcome what the Messenger wanted. With his great position in Islam, Omar is expected to be the happiest one to obtain such a securing directive which was necessary for the future of the Muslims. What could be more important to the nation, while the Messenger was about to leave it and the revelation of God was about to cease, than to obtain a directive which would illuminate the road of the nation and secure its long future?

Furthermore, the duty of all companions who were present on that occasion was to obey the command of the Messenger. He ordered them to bring him a sheet to write his will. The order of the Messenger must be, and should have been, obeyed.

It is erroneous to say that Omar opposed his Prophet out of compassion and that he did not want him to increase his tiredness by dictating a directive. Indeed his opposition caused the Prophet a much bigger pain.

The Messenger was in his last days on this earth. When the Messenger was in the days of his strength and activity, he used to command the Muslims and they used to rush to fulfill his desire even at the expense of their wealth and blood. Now in his final days in this world, he asked them



the cheapest thing (just a writing sheet, and an inkwell), and his order was not obeyed.

The Prophet, no doubt, was greatly disturbed and deeply saddened by their attitude. Nothing would indicate his displeasure than his saying to them: "Go away," and his answer to Omar: "They (the women) are better than you." Had they brought the Messenger what he wanted, they would have lightened his pain. Nothing, at that time, could be more pleasing to the Prophet than the fulfillment of his religious duty by securing his nation against straying.

Abu Bakr wrote his will in which he appointed Omar his successor. He did that while in his death agony, fainting while dictating to Othman the contents of the will. Omar did not blame Othman for assisting the Caliph in his will. And how cruel would it have been to prevent Abu Bakr at such a time from writing his will. . . .

Omar himself was stabbed and fatally wounded. He did not prevent himself from willing to the Muslims what he wanted, in spite of his severe pains, loss of blood and fainting time after time. While in that saddening condition, he ordered six companions of the Prophet to select from among themselves a caliph, to follow the majority, if there were a majority, and to side with Abdul-Rahman Ibn Ouf when the six are equally divided. The Muslims obeyed his order and fulfilled his will in details, though his will did not represent a security for the nation against straying. It rather led them to choose a good-hearted and weak-willed Caliph whose weakness led to his murder, and his murder brought to Muslims incalculable tragedies.

It is very hard indeed to believe that Omar opposed the Prophet's proposed will out of concern for his health.

There is another possible explanation: It could be that Omar knew what would be the content of the proposed will, as he admitted later on, and thought that it would not be in the best interest of the nation. Thus, we may find the answer when we attempt to answer the second question.

## WHAT DID THE PROPHET WANT TO WRITE?

It is not logical to think that the Messenger was trying, at that difficult hour, to write a book containing his teachings and the details of the Islamic laws. Nor was he trying to write to the Muslims the outlines of the Islamic teaching. For the Messenger was well aware of his extremely short time on this earth.

Furthermore, should the Messenger have written the outlines of the Islamic teachings at that moment, he would not have secured the Muslims against straying. The outlines of the Islamic teachings are contained in the Book of God, and in spite of this, the Muslims are still in disagreement, arguing about the details of those general outlines. And because of this, many of them went astray.

The Messenger of God lived 23 years after the commencement of his Prophethood. He never wrote his teachings nor the outlines of the Islamic teachings, nor did he order any Muslim to do that. Yet he was at the peak of his health and activity and the years were the years of teaching and delivery of revelation. For some wisdom, he chose not to do that. It is inconceivable that he was attempting at that difficult and short time to do what he did not do during 23 years of his Prophethood.

Nor was the Prophet trying to command the Muslims to follow the Book of God and his own instructions. The Holy Qur'an, as I have advanced, does command the Muslims to obey God and His Messenger. Yet, that does not secure the nation against straying. People are still in disagreement on the interpretation of the Holy Qur'an and the authenticity of hundreds of hadiths. Again, how could the teachings of the Prophet secure the nation against that when they are not recorded by him, and according to the opinion of great many Muslims, he did not appoint any authority to inform the Muslims of the details of his teachings.

The purpose of the Prophet's attempted directive could not be the two items which Sa-eed Ibn Jubier remembered from Ibn Abbas' words, namely: Driving the pagans out of the Arabian Peninsula and giving the delegations amounts

similar to what he used to give. Both items do not secure the nation against straying. The purpose of the attempted directive could be the item about which Ibn Abbas kept silent or was forgotten by Sa-eed.

### *The Prophet Wanted to Name a Successor*

It is logical to think that the Messenger wanted to appoint a leader whom he considered most knowledgeable in the Islamic teaching, the sincerest to God and His religion and who would be an extension of the Prophet's personality. That leader would be the highest authority for the nation and through his leadership the nation would walk on the clear road.

Evidently, the intended leader was not Omar or Abu Bakr. Had he been one of them, Omar would have been the happiest to see the Prophet's directive written. For we find Omar after the death of the Prophet trying to justify the leadership of Abu Bakr by his being the companion of the Prophet at the Cave during the Hijrah or by his leading the congregational prayer at the time of the ailment of the Prophet. Had the Prophet appointed Abu Bakr through his proposed directive, Omar would not have needed such a justification. Nor would he have needed to argue with the natives of Medina for the merit of Abu Bakr.

The words of the Messenger on the day of Ghadeer Khum, when he declared Ali to be the Moula (Guardian) of the Muslims, were still fresh in Omar's memory. When the Messenger spoke, while on his deathbed, of a written directive after which the Muslims will not go astray, Omar immediately remembered the Declaration of Ghadeer Khum and many other statements. The words are almost the same words contained in his statements about his "Itrah" (members of his House) in general and Ali in particular. The Messenger of God said and Zeid Ibn Arqam reported:

"I have left for you that which if you hold fast, you shall never go astray after me. The Book of God, a rope extended between Heaven and earth and my "Itrah."  
Both the Book and the Itrah will not part with each

other until they join me on the Day of Judgement. Beware how you treat them after me.”<sup>15</sup>

The Imam Ali reported that the Prophet declared on the day of Ghadeer Khum:

“Whoever God and His Messenger are his “Moula,” This (Ali) is his Moula. I have left for you what if you hold fast, *you will never go astray*. The Book of God is His rope being held by His hand and your hands, and the members of my House.”<sup>16</sup>

Zeid Ibn Thabit reported that the Messenger of God said:

“I am leaving in you two caliphs. The Book of God and my Itrah. Beware how you treat them after me. They will not part with each other until they join me on the Day of Judgement.”<sup>17</sup>

Al-Termathi in his Sahih reported through his channel to Jabir Ibn Abdullah Al-Ansari, that he said: “I have seen the Messenger of God in his pilgrimage on the day of Arafat while he was riding his female camel (Al-Quswa), delivering a sermon, and I heard him saying: ‘O people, I have left among you that which if you uphold, you will never go astray: The Book of God and the members of my house.’”<sup>18</sup>

These statements and many other similar statements were still ringing in Omar’s ears. When the Prophet spoke of a directive after which they will not go astray, Omar by his intelligence, immediately understood his intention: The Prophet is trying to record Ali’s name in his directive. He immediately started his opposition.

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15. Al-Termathi, Part 5, p. 328.

16. Recorded by Ibn Rahawaih, Ibn Jareer, Ibn Abu Assim, and Al-Mahamili in his Amali (Kansul-Ummal, Part 15, hadith 356).

17. Imam Ahmad in his Musnad, Part 5, p. 181.

18. Al-Termathi, in his Sunan, Part 5, p. 328. Al-Termathi said also that Abu Tharr, Abu Sa-eed (Al-Khidri), Zeid Ibn Arqam, and Hutheifa Ibn Oseid reported what agrees with this.

### *Why Was Omar Opposed to the Will*

Omar during the days of his reign gave the answer in a reported dialogue between him and Ibn Abbas:

Omar: "How did you leave your cousin behind you?"

Ibn Abbas: "I left him playing with youths of his age (thinking that Omar meant Abdullah Ibn Jaafar)."

Omar: "I did not mean that. I meant your great man (Ali), member of the House of the Prophet."

Ibn Abbas: "I left him drawing water from a well through a bucket for palm trees. . . while reciting the Holy Qur'an."

Omar: "The sacrifice of camels shall be your atonement if you conceal it from me. Is he still holding in his heart something concerning the caliphate?"

Ibn Abbas: "Yes."

Omar: "Does he allege that the Messenger of God appointed him?"

Ibn Abbas: "Yes, and I add to this that I asked my father about his (Ali's) claim (of his appointment by the Messenger as his successor) and my father said Ali told the truth."

Omar: "There were high words from the Messenger (about Ali) which do not constitute a clear evidence nor remove an excuse. For some time he was testing his strength to see if he would be able to appoint him. He wanted during his ailment to name him and I prevented him from it out of concern with (the future of) Islam. By the Lord of the Kaaba, Quraish will not unite behind him, and had he become a caliph, the Arabs throughout the country would have revolted against him."<sup>19</sup>

Omar was concerned with the future of Islam. His sincerity is not questioned, but why would Ali's leadership be disadvantageous to Islam if the Arabs revolted against him? The Arabs revolted against Abu Bakr. Thousands and thousands deserted the faith during his reign. Yet Omar did not

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19. Ibn Abu Al-Hadeed, in his *Commentaries on Nahjul-Balaghah*, Vol. 3, p. 278. And Ahmad Ibn Tahir in his *History of Baghdad*. (Sharaful-Ddeen, Al-Murajaat)

think that he was wrong in supporting the leadership of Abu Bakr.

Again, how did he know that the Arabs would revolt against Ali? Was it not probable that Ali would be the most acceptable to them because of his close relationship to the Prophet and his unequaled fame as a hero, his righteousness and his knowledge in Islam? Then how did he expect all the Arabs to revolt against Ali?

The Medinites were from the Arabs and they were the main portion of the Islamic force in that period, and they were totally sympathetic with Ali. As a matter of fact, they were about to shift to him even after the election of Abu Bakr.

Even when Ali belatedly came to power, the Medinites were solidly behind him. The rest of the Arabs in all the Islamic provinces with the exception of Syria, willingly gave him the pledge of fealty. It is true that a portion of the people of Basrah, Iraq, revolted against him and that the Syrians refused to pledge their fealty to him. But this happened only through incitements by leaders from Quraish. The millions throughout the Muslim state accepted his leadership at a time when most of the Muslims had already forgotten his high distinctions. Had he been given the leadership at the time of the death of the Prophet, and upon a written will by the Prophet, the Arabs, no doubt, would have been more responsive to his leadership.

Omar said that Quraish will never unite behind Ali. This might be true. However, we should not forget that Quraish united against the Prophet and fought him for twenty-one years. Should the Prophethood of Mohammad have been cancelled because of Quraish's opposition?

Knowing Quraish's dark past, Omar should not have taken its opposition to a direction as a mark of unsoundness. He should have rather viewed it as evidence of the soundness of that direction.

Again, who were the powerful leaders of Quraish at the time of the death of the Prophet? Abu Sufyan and the rest of the Pre-Islamic leaders were already conquered and lost their influence. The influential leaders at that time were

Ali, Al-Abbas, Abu Bakr, Omar, Abu Obeidah, Othman, Abdul-Rahman Ibn Ouf, Talhah, Al-Zubeir and the rest of righteous companions from Mecca. These leaders were expected to obey the Prophet's direction and to sway the rest of the Meccans to do so.

Furthermore, history testifies that Abu Sufyan with all his grudges against Ali (who killed his two sons, Hanthalah, Al-Waleed and three of his close relatives in the Islamic defense), was willing to support Ali rather than Abu Bakr.

Whether Quraish was willing or unwilling to support Ali, Omar should have remembered that the Prophet had much more knowledge about the Meccans and the rest of the Arabs than he had. The Prophet, and not Omar, was fought by them, and he knew about them and all companions more than they knew about themselves. Omar should have also remembered that the Prophet was concerned with the future of Islam much more than he was.

With all his concern with the future of Islam and his awareness of the Arab psychology, the Prophet wanted to record Ali's name in his will. The leadership of Ali must have been the answer to the Muslims' problems.

### HOW COULD HE DEFY THE PROPHET?

Of course, we are confronted with the big question: Suppose that Omar was certain of the soundness of his opinion. How did he allow himself to oppose the Prophet, in spite of what is known about him of being righteous and obedient to God and His Messenger?

To answer this question, we ought to know that the companions used to disagree with the Prophet occasionally in matters that belonged to worldly affairs. They used to allow themselves to do so because they believed that Islam granted them the right to disagree with him in such matters. They wrongly believed also that the leadership of the Muslims was one of their worldly affairs. Omar himself disagreed with the Prophet more than once.

#### *The Disagreement With the Prophet At Al-Hudeibyah*

It is a well-known fact in history that Omar disagreed

with the Prophet about the terms on which the Prophet agreed concerning the truce between the Muslims and the pagans of Mecca on the day of Al-Hudeibayah. It was one of the terms that any Muslim from Mecca who came to the Prophet without the permission of the Meccans had to be returned to the Meccans. But if a Muslim chose to leave the Muslims and rejoin the Meccan camp, the Meccans do not have to return him to the Muslims. This appeared to Omar and many other companions to be unfair to the Muslims. The Messenger, however, knew better. A person that leaves Islam to a pagan camp will not benefit the Muslims if he is returned to them by force, and Islam does not need such a person.

Ibn Husham reported in his *Biography of the Prophet* the following:

“When agreement was reached and nothing was left except writing the pact, Omar jumped. . . then he came to the Prophet and said: ‘Messenger of God, are you not the Messenger of God?’ ”

The Prophet: “Yes, I am.”

Omar: “Are we not the Muslims?”

The Prophet: “Yes, you are.”

Omar: “Are they (the Meccans) not the pagans?”

The Prophet: “Yes, they are.”

Omar: “Why should we accept this humiliation to our religion?”

The Prophet: “I am a servant of God and His Messenger. I shall not disobey Him, and He will not forsake me.”<sup>20</sup>

Omar used to say after that: “I am still paying charity, fasting, praying, and freeing slaves as an atonement for what I did.”

### *Disagreed With the Prophet On Osamah*

There was another occasion in which prominent companions disagreed with the Prophet.

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20. Ibn Husham, *Biography of the Prophet*, Part 2, pp. 216-217. Similar to this is recorded by Muslim in Sahih Muslim.



Shortly before his death, the Prophet appointed Osamah Ibn Zeid Ibn Harithah commander of the Muslim army which he ordered to leave for Jordan and Palestine. Abu Bakr, Omar, Abu Obeidah, and the rest of the Prominent companions, except Ali, were in that army. Many of the companions criticized his appointment, thinking that he was too young to lead them. When this was brought to the Prophet's attention, he came to the Mosque while he was sick. He went to the pulpit and said in his address:

“O people, execute the expedition of Osamah. If you are criticizing his appointment, you have criticized the appointment of his father before him. He is qualified for leadership and his father was qualified.”<sup>21</sup>

They dragged their feet until the Messenger of God came out again, while he was seriously sick and holding his head. He said: “O people, execute the mission of Osamah. Execute the mission of Osamah.”

But the companions did not move. Osamah and the rest of the people stayed near Medina, waiting for what God would do to His Messenger.<sup>22</sup>

After the death of the Prophet, many of his companions attempted to dismiss Osamah, though the Messenger appointed him and by his own blessed hand he delivered the banner to him. Omar came speaking for the companions from Medina, requesting Abu Bakr to dismiss Osamah and replace him. Abu Bakr jumped and pulled Omar's beard, saying:

“May your mother be bereaved by your death and may I lose you, son of Al-Khattab. The Messenger of God appointed him, and you ask me to dismiss him!”<sup>23</sup>

The companions from Quraish thought that if the

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21. Ibn Saad, *Al-Tabaqat*, Part 2, p. 249.

22. *Ibid*, p. 249.

23. Al-Halabi in his *Biography of the Prophet*, Part 3, p. 336, and Addahlani in his *Biography of the Prophet*, and Ibn Jareer in his history book where he recorded the event of the year 12 after the Hijrah (*Al-Murajaat*, by Sayed Sharaful-deen, p. 225).

Prophet names Ali in his will, the leadership would stay in his House and would not be accessible to others from the rest of Quraish. Should Ali be the successor, Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein, sons of Ali and the leaders of the youth of Paradise by the testimony of the Prophet, would be his successors. There would be no chance for Meccan or non-Meccan companions, regardless of their high positions, to reach the leadership of the Muslims.

The companions were human beings like the rest of the people. They had their ambitions and love of fame, and they did not want to see the door of leadership slammed entirely in their faces. They wanted that door to stay open. So it would be easy for them to reach the leadership. The rest of the clans of Mecca will support them rather than Ali. Those clans of Mecca were ready to accept any non-Hashimite companion rather than Ali. They had the unholy grudge against him, and they used to envy him for his brilliant record of endeavor for Islam, his knowledge in religion, his relationship to the Prophet and his heroism.

Should the first successor of the Prophet be a companion other than a "Hashimite" (member of the clan of the Prophet), the rest of the Meccan clans could attain the leadership because the non-Hashimite clans are equal. None of them is inferior or superior to others. Tyme (the clan of Abu Bakr) is not better than Oday (the clan of Omar), and Oday is not better than Omayad, or Zuhrah or any other Meccan clan.

Ibn Al-Atheer recorded a dialogue between Omar and Ibn Abbas which indicates that Omar and the rest of the Qureshites were of this idea:

Omar: "Ibn Abbas, do you know what prevented your people (Quraish) from giving you (the Hashimites) the leadership after Mohammad?"

Ibn Abbas: "If I do not know, the Commander of the Believers (Omar) can inform me."

Omar: "They disliked letting you have both the Prophethood and the caliphate, lest you dominate your people. Quraish (the Meccan community) had chosen for itself. It did the right thing and succeeded."

**Ibn Abbas: If the Commander of the Believers permits me to speak and holds away his anger, I will speak."**

**Omar: "Speak."**

**Ibn Abbas: "You said that Quraish has chosen for itself and did the right thing and succeeded. Should Quraish have chosen for itself what God had chosen for it, the right would have been on its side without being refused or envied. As to the statement that they disliked to let us have the Prophethood and the caliphate, certainly, God has described some people with such an attitude and said: 'That is because they disliked what God has revealed, so he nullified their deeds.'"**

**Omar: "Ibn Abbas, by God, I heard things about you which I did not like to believe, lest I lose your respect."**

**Ibn Abbas: "Commander of the Believers, what are the things you heard about me? If they are true, they should not make you lose my respect; if they are false, a person like me should be able to clear himself of falsehood."**

**Omar: "I heard that you say: 'They (the community of Mecca) diverted it (the caliphate) from us out of jealousy, aggression, and injustice.'"**

**Ibn Abbas: "Commander of the Believers, as to the injustice, it has become obvious to the ignorant and the wise; as to the jealousy, Adam was envied and we are his envied children."**

**Omar: "It is too far. Children of Hashim, by God, your hearts refuse to harbor but a permanent jealousy."**

**Ibn Abbas: "Commander of the Believers, be not hasty. Do not describe this way the hearts of people whom God made spotless and purified them of jealousy and bad faith. The heart of the Messenger of God is from the hearts of the children of Hashim."**

**Omar: "Ibn Abbas, be away from me."**

**Ibn Abbas: "I will." (Ibn Abbas said): "When I was attempting to stand up, he (Omar) felt embarrassed and said: 'Ibn Abbas, stay where you are. By God, I am observing your right and loving what pleases you.'"**

**Ibn Abbas: "Commander of the Believers, I am entitled to a right which is due from you and from every Muslim."**

Whoever observes it avails himself, and whoever does not is the loser.”<sup>24</sup>

Omar and other companions thought that since the Meccan clans do not support Ali out of jealousy and grudge, it would be more advisable to have a leader other than him, though the Messenger chose Ali.

Quraish is the community which fought Islam and the Prophethood for twenty-one years, then embraced Islam reluctantly after a crushing defeat. The same community had become the decider of the future of the Muslim nation. The Meccan community's support became a decisive factor that tipped the scale in favor of any contender for the Islamic leadership. This is astonishing. But this was the logic of the events.

#### WHY DID THE PROPHET NOT INSIST ON WRITING HIS DIRECTIVE?

This brings us to the third question: Why did the Messenger not write his directive in spite of Omar's opposition?

The answer is obvious: The purpose of the intended directive is to secure the nation against straying. This can be realized only if the writer of the directive were conscious, alert, knowing what he said, and meaning what he said. But the method of the opposition was clearly casting the doubt on the consciousness of the Messenger and the soundness of his mind at that hour. They said: "The Messenger is being overwhelmed by his ailment," or "What happened to him?" or "Did he hallucinate? Ask him."

All these words portrayed the Messenger as unconscious of what he was saying, or at least seeding the doubt in the minds of others about the consciousness of the Prophet and the soundness of his thinking. Other companions at that meeting shared Omar's opposition. When soundness of the words of the Prophet are doubted, the directive is rendered ineffective. If such a doubt could be expressed while he was alive, it would be much easier to express after his death. By

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24. Ibn Al-Atheer, Al-Kamil, Part 3, p. 31.

this, the intended directive had lost its significance and would not serve its purpose.

Sa-eed Ibn Jubier said that Ibn Abbas reported: "When the ailment of the Prophet grew, he said: 'Bring me an ink-well and a sheet. I will write to you a directive after which you will never go astray.' Some of those who were present with him said, 'The Prophet is hallucinating.' Then the Prophet was asked if he still wants to write a directive. He said: 'After what?' (What is its benefit after what has been said?)<sup>25</sup>

And finally we come to the fourth and final question of the subject:

#### HOW COULD THE DIRECTIVE OF THE MESSENGER BE A SECURITY TO THE NATION AGAINST STRAYING?

No one has the right to claim that he knows what the Prophet knew about the method by which he can secure his nation against straying. However, what appears clearly is the following:

#### *Security Against Sectarianism*

1. Had the Messenger named a person specifically in a written document while his consciousness and soundness of thinking were not doubted, he would have avoided the nation a serious division. Had he named Ali or Abu Bakr or any other one in such a directive, the Muslims would have surrendered to his leadership and the division of the Muslims into Sunni and Shi-i would not have taken place. This division was born out of the dispute about who was the legitimate successor of the Prophet: Is he Abu Bakr or Ali? Should the Messenger have named either of the two men or another one, such a division could not have arisen.

The Prophet made many verbal statements about Ali, but a written statement is much more effective. A verbal statement, as we advanced, can be denied, added to, curtailed or forgotten. A recorded statement is much more difficult to be tampered with.

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25. Ibn Saad, *Al-Tabaqat*, Part 2, p. 242.

Abu Bakr named Omar in writing. And all the followers of Abu Bakr followed his directive. A directive by the Prophet could have been much more effective, and more adhered to by the Muslims than that of Abu Bakr.

Naming a successor by such a directive could have prevented the birth of "Kharijis" (seceders) doctrine, which repudiates Ali and Othman and calls for a Muslim state without a government. The war of Siffeen, which produced this doctrine, could not have happened.

The civil war of Siffeen between the Imam Ali and Muaweyah and prior to that, the war of Basrah, Iraq, between the Imam on one side, and Ayeshah, Talhah, and Al-Zubeir on the other side, were the result of the murder of Othman, the Third Caliph. Should Ali have been named a caliph, in a written directive, Othman would have died before coming to power, because Ali outlived him. Had Ali become the caliph upon a written directive from the Prophet, Muaweyah could not have come to power, nor could his transgressor son Yazeed have been able to massacre the children of the Messenger at Karbala. Nor could the war between the son of Al-Zubeir and the Omayyads and many other tragedies and wars have happened.

All these events were the result of the absence of a Prophet's written directive. Had such a directive been in existence, the history of Islam would have changed, and we would be reading an Islamic history dissimilar to what we read today.

*I would like to rush to say that I do not consider the Second Caliph (Omar) by his opposition to the proposed directive, responsible for the division between the Muslims and all what followed. Omar was a human being unable to foresee the future of the Muslim nation.*

All what Omar was thinking of is that the leadership of the Muslims after the death of the Messenger is one of the worldly affairs which the Meccan companions have the right to decide in it according to what their interest dictated to them. He did not want the Prophet to write a final word in this matter in order to keep the door open for the companions. Should the Messenger have written his directive, his

word becomes final. The Holy Qur'an declares:

**“And it is not permissible to a believing man or a believing woman, when God and His Messenger have decided an affair (for them), that they should (after that) claim any say in their affairs: And whoever is rebellious to God and His Messenger, he verily goes astray in error manifest.”<sup>26</sup>** (It is worthy to note that when a Divine decision is stated verbally, it would be as final as a written one. Otherwise, all the Prophet's decisions and statements would not be binding, because they were not written during his time.)

The only one who was able to foresee the future and not through his own power but through the revelation, was the Prophet himself. He had seen by the light of God the future of his nation and that if it would remain without a written directive, the faith-testing trials will close on it as pieces of a dark night (and this is what his companion Abu Muwaihbihah reported). Thus, he wanted to spare the nation those foreseen trials which would destroy its unity. And for this, he said:

**“Bring me an inkwell and a sheet to write to you a directive after which you will not go astray.”**

### *Security Against School Division*

2. A written directive by the Prophet in which he names his successor would not only be a security to the nation against sectarian divisions but also against the multiplicity of the Islamic School of Law. The Prophet declared that the Qur'an and his “Itrah” (members of his House) are the security against straying and that the Holy Qur'an and the “Itrah” will not part with each other until the Day of Judgment.

Were Ali (the head of the members of the House of the Prophet) the highest Muslim authority after the Prophet, he would have been that security. He was undisputedly the most knowledgeable in the Holy Qur'an and the teaching of

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26. Chapter 33, verse 36.

the Prophet. The first two Caliphs (Abu Bakr and Omar), with all their profound knowledge in Islam, used to resort to him in what they did not know.

Omar repeatedly said: "Had not the counsel of Ali been available, Omar would have perished (religiously)." And he said: "May God not keep me to a problem for which Abu Hassan (Ali) is not available."

Ibn Saad reported that Ali said: "By God, there isn't a revealed verse which I do not know about what and where and about whom it was revealed. My Lord has granted me a comprehending mind and a fluent and inquiring tongue."<sup>27</sup>

Ali was asked why was he, among the companions of the Prophet, the biggest reporter of his statements? He replied: "He used to inform me when I asked him and to initiate (his teaching) when I was silent."<sup>28</sup>

Sa-eed Ibn Al-Musavab said: "No one other than Ali ever said: 'Ask me before you miss me.'"<sup>29</sup>

Ali is the one about whom the Messenger of God said: "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate. Whoever wants to enter the city should come through the gate."<sup>30</sup>

Omm Salemah (wife of the Prophet) reported that she heard the Prophet saying:

"Ali is with the Qur'an, and the Qur'an is with Ali. They will not part with each other until the Day of Judgement."<sup>31</sup>

Had Ali been the immediate successor of the Prophet through his written directive, the instructions of the Prophet would have been known and the Muslims would have agreed upon them in the various branches of the Islamic laws.

Thus, the Prophet wanted to use Ali as the uniting force for all muslims in all generations, and this could have prevented them from going astray.

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27. Muttaqi Hindi, in his *Kanzul-Ummal*, Part 15, p. 113.

28. *Ibid*, p. 113.

29. *Ibid*, p. 113.

30. Al-Hakim, *Al-Mustadrak*, Part 3, p. 124.

31. Al-Hakim, *Al-Mustadrak*, Part 3, p. 127.



PART II

THE IMAM  
DURING THE ERA  
OF THE THREE CALIPHS



## Abu Bakr Succeeds

Finally, the inevitable came to pass. The Prophet Mohammad died, and his death was the greatest loss mankind ever suffered. The Heavenly revelation to the people of the earth came to an end. He was the Final of the Prophets, and no prophet will come after him.

The Muslims were so overwhelmed by the death of the Prophet that it was difficult for an outstanding companion to conceive it.

### *Omar Denied the Prophet's Death*

Omar stood at the Mosque, saying: "Some hypocrites allege that the Messenger of God died. The Messenger did not die. He only went to his Lord as Moses, son of Imran, went to his Lord. He left his people for forty nights, then he returned to them after it was said that he died. By God, the Messenger of God will return as Moses returned. He will sever the hands and legs of men alleging that he died."<sup>1</sup>

### *Abu Bakr's Speech*

Abu Bakr was more realistic and present-minded than Omar. He stood up and said:

"O people, whoever was worshipping Mohammad should know that Mohammad has died. Whoever was worshipping God should know that God is living and never dies." Then he recited the following verses:

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1. Ibn Husham, in his *Biography of the Prophet*, Part 2, p. 655.

“And Mohammad is but a Messenger. The Messengers before him passed away. Should you turn on your heels if he will die or be killed? And whoever turns on his heels will not harm God in the least. And God will reward the thankful.”<sup>2</sup>

Hearing these words, Omar realized that the Prophet was dead and fell to the ground.

### *Preoccupied With Holy Funeral*

The crushing weight of the tragedy was felt by no one as it was felt by Ali and the rest of the members of the House of the Prophet. The death of the Prophet made them unconscious of other things in the world. The sadness of this bereaved family was indescribable. They wished to depart from this world when he departed.

The Prophet confided in his daughter Fatima Al-Zahra twice during his ailment. He once informed her of his death and she cried. Then he informed her that she will be the first member of his family to follow him, and she laughed. She was joyful to know that she would not be separated from him for long.

Her husband Ali spent twenty-three years with the Prophet offering his life for the protection of the Prophet against danger. Suddenly he beheld that that precious life had ended while he was unable to redeem it. The death of the Prophet was more painful to Ali than if he himself had met his own death.

### *Political Conference*

The tragedy, however, did not prevent the rest of the companions, Meccans and Medinites, from political thinking and doing while the Prophet was not yet buried.

As previously mentioned, the Messenger attempted but could not write a will in which he was expected to name a successor. He tried to name a man whose leadership represented a security to the nation against straying. A group

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2. Ibn Husham, *Biography of the Prophet*, Part 2, p. 656.

of companions, led by Omar, objected to recording such a document, and the method of their objection rendered the Prophet's proposed document useless.

The Declaration of Ghadeer Khum, and the rest of the statements of the Prophet on various occasions concerning Ali were ignored. The best that can be said about the attitude of the companions towards these statements is that they did not see in them compelling evidence for Ali's appointment. The Meccans and the Medinites started and ended their competition for leadership before the Prophet was buried.

### *Omar Spoke of the Conference*

Omar, during the last year of his reign, spoke of what took place after the death of the Prophet. He informed his audience that when the Prophet died, the Medinites led by Saad Ibn Abadah separated themselves from the Meccans, and their prominent men conferred at Saqifat Banu Sa'idah, trying to select a caliph from among themselves. Ali Ibn Abu Talib, Al-Zubeir Ibn Al-Awam, and others with them shied away, and the Meccans went with Abu Bakr.

Abu Bakr, Omar, and Abu Obediah Ibn Al-Jarrah went to the conference of the Medinites to thwart their attempt. Abu Bakr said to the Medinites that the Arabs would not accept a leader from other than the clans of Quraish (people of Mecca) who were the most prominent among the Arabs and from the most honorable city. It is reported that Abu Bakr told them that the Holy Prophet one time declared that the Imams are from Quraish.<sup>3</sup> "I am satisfied, he told them, with the leadership of any of these two men (Omar and Abu Obediah). Give your allegiance to whomever you choose of the two." Some of the Medinites suggested having a leader from them and another from the Meccans. The argument was heated and Omar said to Abu Bakr: "Extend your hand." Abu Bakr did, and Omar shook his hand and pledged to him his allegiance. The attending

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3. Dr. Taha Hussein, *Al-Fitnatul-Kubra*, Part 1, p. 35.

Meccans followed him and the conferring Medinites, with the exception of Saad Ibn Abadah and his strong supporters, accorded.

On the following day, people gathered at the Mosque. Omar stood up and told the audience: "God has enabled you to agree on your best, the companion of the Prophet who accompanied him at the Cave (of Thour at the time of the Hijrah). Rise up and give your allegiance to him." And they did.<sup>4</sup>

### LEGAL AND HISTORICAL QUESTIONS

The succession of Abu Bakr raises these questions:

1. Did Abu Bakr ever claim that the Messenger of God made him his successor?
2. If the Prophet did not appoint him, did he desire to appoint him?
3. Was the election of Abu Bakr legal from the Islamic point of view?
4. Did the Messenger say: "The Imams are from Quraish?" and what did he mean by that?

History answers the first question in the negative, for Abu Bakr never claimed that the Messenger made him his successor. Nor did any of the companions who worked diligently for the establishment of his caliphate ever claim that the Messenger made Abu Bakr his successor. The reader may remember that the argument of Abu Bakr which he introduced at the Medinite's conference did not contain any hint to any appointment by the Prophet. He only told the conferees that Arabs would not recognize any leadership that was not a Qureshite. For Quraish, he said, are the most respected people among the Arabs and they are from the most honorable city. Had the Prophet expressed his desire to make him his successor, Abu Bakr would have made the Prophet's statement his sole argument, without resorting to the distinction of Quraish. Omar also would have quoted such a statement to support his argument for Abu Bakr's election.

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4. Ibn Husham, in his *Biography of the Prophet*, Part 2, pp. 659-660.

The Sunni scholars unanimously agree that the Holy Prophet never appointed a successor. This means that they agree that he did not make Abu Bakr his successor.

However, it is reported that a contemporary Medinite scholar from the Wahabis claimed that the Messenger of God appointed Abu Bakr as his successor.<sup>5</sup> He supported his claim by a hadith which reported that the Messenger said: "And God and the believers reject (any leadership) except that of Abu Bakr." He also claimed that this hadith is "Mutawatir" (reported through numerous channels which makes it certain).

This hadith is what Muslim in his Sahih recorded through his channel to Urwah who reported that Ayeshah said: "The Messenger said to me: Call for me your father Abu Bakr and your brother, so that I can write a directive. I fear that a wisher may wish and a sayer may say: I have more right (to the leadership than Abu Bakr) and God and the believers reject (any leadership) except that of Abu Bakr."<sup>6</sup>

Al-Bukhari recorded it in a similar way but it contained the word: "I almost attempted to call Abu Bakr and his son and write a directive. . . ."<sup>7</sup>

It is worthy to note that this hadith is not mutawatir as this Wahabi scholar claimed, for it was not reported by numerous companions. As a matter of fact, it was reported only by Ayeshah.

However, introducing this hadith as evidence for the appointment of Abu Bakr as a successor is evidence of the lack of profound knowledge of the hadiths, for this hadith is opposed by three authentic hadiths which are reported by Ayeshah herself:

#### *Ayeshah Reported the Opposite*

Muslim recorded through his channel to Masrooq that Ayeshah said: "The Messenger of God did not leave behind

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5. Sheikh Mohammad Jawad Mugneyah recorded this in his book *Hatbi Hiya Al-Wahabiyah* (This Is the Wahabism).

6. Muslim, Sahih Muslim, Part 15, p. 155.

7. Al-Nawawi in his commentary on Sahih Muslim conveyed this.

him a dinar or a dirham, or a sheep or a camel, nor did he will anything.”<sup>8</sup>

Had the Prophet appointed Abu Bakr as his successor, Ayeshah would not have said: “Nor did he (the Prophet) will anything.” For if he had appointed Abu Bakr, he would have willed a very important thing.

Muslim also recorded through his channel to Al-Aswad Ibn Yazeed that he reported that people mentioned in the presence of Ayeshah that Ali was the executor (of the Holy Prophet). She said: “When did he (the Prophet) make him his executor? I was supporting the back of the Messenger by my chest, or she said by my lap. He called for a basin, then he collapsed on my lap, and I did not think that he died. When did he make him his executor?”<sup>9</sup>

This hadith explains the previous hadith in which Ayeshah said: “Nor did he will anything.” In both hadiths, she was trying to disprove that the Messenger made Ali his executor. This, by itself, indicates that the idea of the executorship of Abu Bakr was not in circulation among people. What was in circulation is that the Messenger made Ali his executor. Therefore, she was trying actively to disprove it.

Had she known that the Messenger appointed Abu Bakr, she would have said to those who mentioned Ali’s executorship that her father, rather than Ali, was the executor.

Muslim also recorded through his channel to Abu Ma-leekah that he reported the following:

“I heard Ayeshah, and she was questioned: Had the Prophet wanted to appoint a successor, whom would he have appointed? She said Abu Bakr. They said to her: Then whom would he have appointed after Abu Bakr? She said: Omar. Then she was asked: Whom would he have appointed after Omar? She said: Abu Obeidah Ibn Al-Jarrah. Then she stopped there.”<sup>10</sup>

Had the Messenger said: “and God and the believers reject (any leadership) except that of Abu Bakr, she would

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8. Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, Part 11 (*Book of Will*), p.89.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*, Part 11, p. 154,



have rejected the hypothetical question concerning the Prophet's appointment of a successor. For the appointment would be a fact, rather than a hypothesis, and Abu Bakr would be the actual appointee. But Ayeshah treated the matter hypothetically, because the Prophet made no such statement concerning Abu Bakr.

### *Obvious Prejudice*

The prejudice of Ayeshah against Ali is clear in the last three hadiths. In Abu Maleekah's hadith she tried to tell us that Abu Obeidah was more beloved to the Prophet and was more deserving to be caliph than Ali. No one subscribes to this, for the Muslims unanimously agree that Ali was higher and more beloved to the Messenger of God than Abu Obeidah.

In Al-Aswad Ibn Yazeed's hadith, the mother of believers tried to disprove the executorship of Ali through no proof. Granting that the Messenger died while he was reclining on her chest and that he did not make Ali his executor at that hour, this does not disprove Ali's executorship.

The Holy Prophet spoke publicly at Ghadeer Khum, in Ali's behalf, saying to thousands of Pilgrims that Ali was the "Moula" (Guardian) of the believers and that he is like the Prophet in having more right to them than they have to themselves.

Furthermore, Omm Salemah reported what contradicts the claim of Ayeshah. Al-Hakim, through a channel which he and Al-Thahabi considered to be authentic, reported that Omm Salemah (wife of the Prophet) said: "By the One in Whose Name I swear, Ali was the last one in contact with the Messenger of God. We visited the Prophet before noon and he was saying repeatedly: "Did Ali come?" Fatima said: "It seems that you have sent him for a mission." She (Omm Salemah) said: "Ali came, and I thought that the Prophet had something to tell him confidentially. We left the room—and sat at the door, and I was the nearest to the door. The Messenger leaned upon Ali confiding in him and speaking to him secretly. Then the Messenger of God died

on that day. Thus, Ali was the last one who was with the Prophet.”<sup>11</sup>

### *The Story of Maghafeer*

Ayeshah used to allow herself to report some events which never took place, if the report would serve the interest which she favored. The story of Maghafeer (a thick secretion which comes out of some particular trees) is well known in the Islamic history *and mentioned* in the Holy Qur'an in Chapter 66 of "Al-Tahreem." She and Hafssah (daughter of the Second Caliph) conspired that each one of them individually was to say to the Prophet: "I smell on you the odor of Al-Maghafeer," while both of them knew that this was untrue.

Al-Bukhari recorded in his Sahih that Obeid Ibn Omeir reported that Ayeshah said: "The Messenger of God used to drink honey at the house of Zeinab, daughter of Juhsh (another wife of the Prophet) and stay with her. Hafssah and I conspired to tell the Prophet when he comes to either one of us: "You have eaten Maghafeer. I smell the odor of Maghafeer." He said: "No, but I was drinking honey at Zeinab's house, and I will not do it again. And I swear that you shall not inform anyone about this."<sup>12</sup>

Ayeshah betrayed the trust of the Prophet by revealing what he commanded her not to reveal. God informed him of that and this made the Prophet angry. The chapter of Al-Tahreem was revealed for this event. It contains the following:

"When the Prophet disclosed a matter in confidence to one of his wives, and she then divulged it to (another) and God made it known to him, he (the Prophet) told (her) a portion of it and mentioned not another portion. When he told her thereof, she said: Who told thee this? He said: The One who knows and is well acquainted (with all things). If ye (both) were to turn in repentance to the Al-

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11. Al-Hakim, Al-Mustadrak, Part 3, p. 139.

12. Al-Bukhari, Sahih Al-Bukhari, Part 6, *Book of Commentary on the Holy Qur'an*. It is in the comment on the chapter of Al-Tahreem, p. 194.

mighty, your hearts would be indeed so inclined. But (if ye collaborate) with each other against him (the Prophet), truly God is his protector; and Gabriel and the righteous believers, and furthermore, the angels will assist him.”<sup>13</sup>

Al-Bukhari reported also through his channel to Obeid Ibn Hunein, that he said: I heard Ibn Abbas saying: I stayed a whole year trying to ask Omar Ibn Al-Khattab about a Qur’anic verse and I could not ask out of apprehension, until he set out for pilgrimage and I was with him. While we were on the road, coming back to Medina, he deviated to some trees to relieve himself. Ibn Abbas said: I waited for him until he finished, then I walked with him. I said: Amir Al-Mumineen (Commander of Believers), who are the two of the wives of the Holy Prophet that collaborated against the Prophet? Omar said: They are Hafssah and Ayesah.<sup>14</sup>

#### *Omar Considered the Election as “Faltah”*

If any one asks for more evidence on the fact that the Holy Prophet did not make Abu Bakr his successor, the following statement of Omar concerning the election of Abu Bakr is sufficient to clear the matter completely:

Al-Bukhari in his Sahih,<sup>15</sup> Ibn Husham in his Biography of the Prophet,<sup>16</sup> and Imam Ahmad in his Musnad,<sup>17</sup> reported that Omar said in a sermon he delivered during the last year of his caliphate:

“. . . I am informed that a man from among you says: By God, if Omar dies I will elect “Fulan” (an x person whose name Omar did not want to mention). No man should be deceived by saying to himself that the election of Abu Bakr was “Faltah,” and it passed. Certainly the election of Abu Bakr was a “Faltah” (a hasty action without due deliberation). . . .”

This indicates that the Holy Prophet never expressed

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13. Holy Qur’an, Chapter 66, pp. 1-4.

14. Sahih Al-Bukhari, Part 6, p. 195.

15. Al-Bukhari in his Sahih, Part 8, p. 210.

16. Ibn Husham in his *Biography of the Prophet*, Part 2, p. 658.

17. Imam Ahmad in his Musnad, Part 1, p. 55.

his desire to make Abu Bakr his caliph. Had the Prophet expressed such a desire or said what was reported through Ayeshah, the election of Abu Bakr would not have been a hasty action and without due deliberation. It would have been, rather, of the best planned action, for it would have been planned by God and His Messenger.

### *Omar's Last Statement*

However, the Second Caliph made this completely clear after he was stabbed. Muslim in his *Sahih*,<sup>18</sup> and Ibn Saad in *Al-Tabaqat*<sup>19</sup> and Ibn Husham in his *Biography of the Prophet*,<sup>20</sup> reported that Abdullah Ibn Omar said that he advised his father to name a successor and Omar said: "If I do not name a successor the Messenger of God did not name a successor; and if I name a successor, Abu Bakr named a successor."

Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih* reported that Abdullah Ibn Omar said: "It was said to his father: Why do you not name a successor?" He said: "If I name a successor, one better than myself, Abu Bakr, did name a successor. And if I do not name a successor, one better than myself, the Messenger of God did not name a successor."<sup>21</sup>

### DID THE MESSENGER OF GOD DESIRE TO APPOINT ABU BAKR AS HIS SUCCESSOR?

The events of the last days of the life of the Holy Prophet clearly indicate that the succession of Abu Bakr was not on the mind of the Messenger. Nothing substantiates that like the expedition of Osamah. The Messenger of God made Osamah Ibn Zeid Ibn Harithah a commander in chief of an army and issued a directive in which he commanded him to overrun the borders of Al-Balqa and Al-Daroom in the land of Palestine. People prepared themselves and the early migrants from Mecca joined the army of Osamah.<sup>22</sup>

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18. Muslim in his *Sahih*, Part 12, p. 206.

19. Ibn Saad in his *Tabaqat*, Part 3, p. 342.

20. Ibn Husham in his *Biography of the Prophet*, Part 2, p. 653.

21. Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih*, Part 9, p. 100.

22. Ibn Husham, *Biography of the Prophet*, Part 2, p. 642.

From the well-known events of history in Osamah's expedition are the following:

1. Abu Bakr, Omar and others from the early migrants were in Osamah's army.<sup>23</sup>

2. Ali Ibn Abu Talib was not in that army.

It seems that the Messenger did not want Ali to participate in more battles after the Islamic state was established in the Arab Peninsula as a result of the defensive battles in which Ali was the outstanding hero. He did not allow (or at least did not order) him to attend the Battle of Muthah where he sent a Muslim army under the leadership of Zeid Ibn Harithah (father of Osamah) to the borders of Syria, where Zeid, Jaafar Ibn Abu Talib and Abdullah Ibn Rawahah were killed. Nor did he allow Ali to join him in the campaign of Tabuk. He chose to keep him in Medina to succeed him in his absence.

The foundations of the Islamic state were already established and it became unnecessary to expose Ali's life to more dangers. Therefore, he did not send him with the army of Osamah. Had Ali been in that expedition, the expedition would have been under his leadership rather than the leadership of Osamah. The Prophet never put Ali under any leadership in any battle. He was the bearer of the banner of the Holy Prophet in all the battles which were led by the Prophet.<sup>24</sup> And he was the Commander in Chief of every expedition in which the Holy Prophet sent Ali.

The readers of the history of Islam knew that the Prophet gave Abu Bakr and Omar the command of the army at the Battle of Kheibar on two consecutive days. Ali was at that time suffering from inflammation of his eyes which prevented him from participating in the battle. When his eyes were miraculously cured on the third day, Ali became

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23. This is recorded by Ibn Al-Atheer in *Al-Kamil* and by Ibn Saad, *Al-Tabaqat*, Part 2, p. 190; and by Al-Dahlani, and Al-Tabari, in his history, and Al-Halabi in his *Biography of the Prophet*, (all this was conveyed by Sharaful-deen in *Al-Murajaat*).

24. Ibn Saad, in his *Al-Tabaqat*, Part 3, p. 25, and Al-Hakim in his *Al-Mustadrak*, Part 3, p. 111.

the Commander in Chief and the two sheikhs, Abu Bakr and Omar, and the rest of the companions were under his leadership.

Ibn Saad reported that the Messenger of God made Osama commander of the army. When Wednesday came, the ailment of the Messenger began; he had fever and a headache. On Thursday morning he gave the banner to Osamah: Osamah carried the banner, then delivered it to Buraidah Al-Aslami and camped at Al-Jurf. All distinguished companions from the Meccans and Medinites including Abu Bakr, Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, Abu Obeidah Ibn Al-Jarrah, and Saad Ibn Abu Waqass joined Osamah's army."<sup>25</sup>

3. The Messenger fell ill after he gave the banner to Osamah. The army was still near Medina and did not begin its journey yet. The Messenger was alarmed by the slowness of the army's motion and reluctance of the soldiers to leave Medina. Therefore, he went to the Mosque twice while he was ill, commanding them to begin their journey and to move quickly. He repeated his order three times in one sermon.<sup>26</sup>

He did all this while he was aware of the nearness of his death. His awareness of his death is reported in the following hadiths:

A. Ibn Husham recorded that Abu Muwaihahah reported that the Prophet accompanied him to Al-Baqee cemetery at night before the beginning of his illness. The Prophet stood in the graveyard and congratulated its dwellers for being spared future faith-testing crises. Abu Muwaihahah reported that the Messenger said to him:

"Abu Muwaihahah, I have been given the keys of the treasures of this world and the eternal life in it along with Paradise (in the Hereafter). I was given the choice between that and meeting my Lord and Paradise. Abu Muwaihahah said: May my father and mother be your redemption. Take the keys of the treasures of this world and the eternal life in it, along with Paradise. He said: "No, Abu

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25. Ibn Saad, *Al-Tabaqat*, Part 2, p. 249.

26. Ibn Saad, *Al-Tabaqat*, Part 2, p. 249.

Muwaihibah, I have chosen to meet my Lord and Paradise.”<sup>27</sup>

B. And when he sat on his pulpit delivering a sermon while he was sick, he, according to Ibn Husham, concluded the sermon by saying: “Certainly God has given a choice to one of His servants (the Prophet was referring to himself) between this world along with the Hereafter, and what the Lord has. The servant chose what the Lord has (he chose to meet his Lord).<sup>28</sup> Thus, he was informing his audience that he was about to depart from this world.

C. Muslim recorded in his Sahih that the Holy Prophet said to his daughter Fatima while he was suffering from his ailment by which he died: “Gabriel used to review the Holy Qur’an with me once or twice a year and now he has reviewed it with me twice.” Then he said to her: “I sense that my death is drawing nigh. Be obedient to God and patient, I am a good ancestor of yours. . . .”<sup>29</sup>

D. Al-Bukhari through his channel to Ayeshah recorded that she said: “The Prophet called upon Fatimah (peace be upon her), in his ailment in which he died, and confided in her on a matter and she cried: Then he confided in her on another matter, and she laughed. When we asked her about that, she said: ‘He informed me that he will die in his present ailment, and I cried. Then he informed me that I shall be the first among the members of his House to follow him, and I laughed.’”<sup>30</sup>

All these hadiths testify that he was fully aware of the nearness of his death.

Had the Messenger been desirous to appoint Abu Bakr as his successor while he knew the nearness of his death, he would not have ordered him to leave Medina quickly. Instead of urging Abu Bakr along with the others to leave Medina, the Prophet should have prevented Abu Bakr from joining the expedition.

For the expedition of Osamah to reach the land of Pale-

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27. Ibn Husham, *Biography of the Prophet*, Part 2, p. 642.

28. Ibn Husham, in his *Biography of the Prophet*, Part 2, p. 649.

29. Muslim, in his Sahih, Part 17, p. 7.

30. Al-Bukhari, in his Sahih, Part 7, p. 12.

stine, fight and return to Medina, it would take two months or more. The Prophet, on the other hand, might have died a few days after the departure of the army, and he himself was expecting to die soon. He did not appoint Abu Bakr before the departure of the army. He could not appoint him after his return with the army from Palestine because Abu Bakr would not be able to see the Prophet alive. He would not appoint him while he was absent from Medina, for it would be inconceivable that the Messenger would allow the capital to be without a caliph after his death for two months or more while he knew the dangers which were threatening Medina and the Faith of Islam.

Furthermore, Abu Bakr could have been killed while he was in the expedition. The death of a caliph at a battle during that serious period would lead to the worst consequences for the Muslims and Islam.

Had the Messenger been desirous to appoint Abu Bakr as a successor, he would not have allowed him to be in that army. But the fact is that the delay of Abu Bakr and other companions in Medina was against the will of the Prophet which he made clearly known. He emphatically urged them to execute the mission of Osamah, repeating that several times while he was on the pulpit and on his deathbed.

Thus, Abu Bakr, in spite of his high position and the love of the Prophet to him, was not meant by the Prophet to be his successor.

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### WAS THE ELECTION OF ABU BAKR LEGAL?

The Muslims had the right to elect Abu Bakr if the Messenger did not choose another person to succeed him. And Abu Bakr had the right to accept the election. Such an election constitutes a contract which exacts from both sides its fulfillment according to the conditions on which the election was based. When the conditions of the election demand from the elected to follow the Book of God and the teaching of the Prophet and that the elector should obey his elect in what is considered to be an obedience to God



and His Messenger, the election would be sound and binding to both sides.

However, such an election, in spite of its legality, had two negative sides:

1. *The right to disagree with the majority.* Since the succession of Abu Bakr came by a popular election rather than by the Prophet's selection, a good Muslim could have refused to join his electors without sinning. Every Muslim is entitled to political freedom, and no one has the right to force any one to do what he does not want, or to impose on him a restriction that did not come from God. He should not be forced to elect a person whom he does not want to authorize.

It is equally true that the minority has no right to stand in the way of the majority and to prevent it from administering the affairs of the country as long as there is an explicit or implicit agreement that the majority rules the country. Even in the absence of such an agreement, the majority has the right to run the country. This is because the minority has no right to administer the affairs of the majority and if the majority is to be obstructed, the country would be ruined.

Since every individual has the right to disagree with the majority, it would be an injustice on the part of the majority to force a minority to agree with it. For this, we think it was an injustice to force Al-Zubeir Ibn Al-Awam to elect Abu Bakr, though he was qualified for leadership. Abu Bakr was not appointed by God and His Messenger and Al-Zubeir's refusal to elect him did not constitute a violation of any Divine commandment. Abu Bakr and the majority of the companions entered into a pact, and Al-Zubeir had the right not to be a part of that pact. Forcing him to enter into such a pact was an encroachment on his rights.

It was more than unfair to try to force Ali to join the electors after the Prophet declared him the "Moula" (Guardian) of every Muslim, including Abu Bakr. The right of an individual or a minority to disagree with the majority is sacred and observed in all democratic elections. When more than one nominee compete for a high office,

and one of the nominees wins the majority's votes, the majority does not attempt to force the electors of the loser to join them in electing the winner. Even in a nation with one political party, where the government asks people to cast their votes by saying yes or no; when the result becomes known, the government never forces those who said "no" to say "yes." This is the attitude of Islam, the religion of justice.

Forcing people to do what they do not have to do is an aggression, and God does not love the aggressors.

When the Imam Ali was elected after the death of Othman, Abdullah Ibn Omar, Saad Ibn Abu Waqass, Osamah Ibn Zeid, and other companions refused to elect him. The Imam did not force them to join the majority, nor did he consider them transgressors. *He only demanded from them not to hinder his administration.*

The companions who lived at the time of Abu Bakr's election had the right to elect or refuse to elect him, and they had the right to believe or disbelieve in his qualification. If so, the Muslim generations who were born after that election had the same right. They would not be sinning by taking a positive or a negative attitude towards the caliphate of Abu Bakr.

*From this, it becomes evident that the mutual incrimination by the Muslims of today for their positive or negative attitude toward the caliphate of Abu Bakr is erroneous and represents an extremism.*

2. The second negative aspect of this kind of legitimate leadership is that it does not make the word or the deed of the caliph a sacred law. Before his election he was, like any other companion, unimmunized of error; and he would remain so after the election. The election does not change his personality, nor does it increase his knowledge. It does not elevate him in the eyes of God above other good believers, nor does it make all his words or deeds right. At best he would be a righteous "mujtahid" (a scholar who is capable of forming an independent opinion about the Islamic law). Other scholars have the right to disagree with him, and the

non-scholars from among the Muslims have the right to follow scholars other than him.

When another mujtahid believes that such a capilh is erroneous in word or deed, he should not follow him. To demand from the Muslims to follow a wrong verdict is to demand from people what God did not demand, and to add to the religion what is not from the religion.

### *The Prophet's Appointee*

These two negative sides of an elective leadership would not exist in a leadership based on an appointment by the Prophet. If the Prophet chose a leader, his decision would be binding on every Muslim, and according to the Holy Qur'an, no one would have the right to defy it:

“And it is not permitted for believing man or believing woman to make a choice after God and His Messenger have decided in an affair. And whoever disobeys God and His Messenger would be in manifest error.”<sup>31</sup>

When the people pledge allegiance to the Prophet's appointee, they would be in fact pledging the same to the Messenger. And whoever pledges to the Messenger would be pledging to God. The Holy Qur'an declares:

“Certainly those who pledge allegiance to thee in fact they do that to God. The hand of God is above their hands. And whoever breaches a covenant he breaches against himself, and whoever fulfills what he promises God, God will grant him a great reward.”<sup>32</sup>

A caliph appointed by the Messenger possesses a holiness that issues from the holiness of the Messenger. His contemporary Muslims have to follow his order and rules, and so do the generations after them. To a certain degree, he has jurisdictions that resemble those of the Prophet, except that he is not a Prophet. He is not expected to add to, nor substract from the Islamic rules. There shall be no

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31. Chapter 33, verse 36.

32. Chapter 48, verse 10.

Prophet after Mohammad, and the rules of Mohammad are eternal and will continue until the Day of Judgment. A caliph appointed by the Prophet represents him, and because of that he is supposed to be the most knowledgeable of the Holy Qur'an and the teaching of the Prophet. Whatever he declares legal is legal, and whatever he declares illegal is forbidden. No Muslim has the right to disagree with him. He is the most knowledgeable, and his obedience is as that of the Messenger.

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### QURAISH AND THE CALIPHATE

Did the Prophet say that the Imams are from Quraish? And if he did say that, did he mean that the caliphate is by election or by inheritance, or by appointment from the Prophet?

Many hadiths on this subject are recorded in the Sahihs and other books, of which are the following:

Muslim recorded that Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of God said: "People are followers of Quraish. Their Muslim follows their Muslim, and their Kafir (unbeliever) follows their Kafir."<sup>33</sup>

He recorded also that Jaber Ibn Abdullah reported that the Prophet said: "People are followers of Quraish in good and in evil."<sup>34</sup>

Muslim also recorded that Abdullah reported that the Messenger said: "The Islamic authority (Caliphate) will stay in Quraish as long as two men exist in this world."<sup>35</sup>

He reported also that Jaber Ibn Samorah reported that the Messenger of God said: "This religion will continue until the Day of Judgement comes or 12 caliphs from Quraish rule you."<sup>36</sup>

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33. This hadith, and the following three hadiths are recorded by Muslim in his Sahih, Part 12 *Book of Al-Imarah*, pp. 200-202.

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36.

Al-Bukhari recorded that Ibn Omar reported that the Messenger of God said: This Islamic authority will stay in Quraish as long as two persons from Quraish remain alive.”<sup>37</sup>

He recorded through his channel to Jaber Ibn Samorah that he said: “I heard the Prophet saying: ‘There shall be twelve rulers.’ Then he said a word I did not hear, and my father said that the Prophet said: ‘All of them are from Quraish.’ ” Al-Termathi recorded the same, except that he said that the Prophet said: “There will be twelve rulers after me,” and that the father of Jaber said: “The Messenger said: ‘All of them are from Quraish.’ ”<sup>39</sup> Al-Hakim through his channel to Masrouq recorded that he said:

“While we were sitting with Abdullah (Ibn Omar), a man asked him: ‘Abu Abdul-Rahman, did you and other companions ask the Messenger of God how many caliphs will rule this nation?’ Abdullah replied: ‘No one before you asked me about this since I came to Iraq.’ Then he said: ‘We asked the Messenger of God and he said: Twelve, the same number as the representatives of the children of Israel with Moses.’”<sup>40</sup>

Imam Ahmad reported that Abu Bakr said: (to Saad Ibn Abadah) “And you, Saad, knew that the Messenger of God said while you were sitting: ‘Quraish are the people of this authority. The righteous of the people are followers of their righteous, and the wicked of the people are followers of their wicked.’”<sup>41</sup>

It is clear that the first hadith does not speak about the caliphate. For Quraish at the time of the caliphate was not divided into Muslims and non-Muslims. All the Qureshites were confessing Islam at that time. It seems that the hadith came at a time when the majority of the Qureshites were pagans. The hadith speaks of the influence of Quraish over

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37. Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari* (in the book of *Al-Ahkam*), Part 9, p. 78.

39. Al-Termathi in his *Sunan*, Part 2, p. 35. (Al-Fairuzbadi in his book *Fadha-il Al-Khamsah* Virtue of the Five), Part 2, p. 23.

40. Al-Hakim, *Al-Mustadrak*, Part 4, p. 501.

41. Imam Ahmad, in his *Al-Musnad*, Part 1, p. 5.

the Arab tribes. For they were opposed to Islam when Quraish was fighting it. When Quraish entered the new faith, the rest of the Arabs rushed into the faith. The Prophet in this hadith was not trying to announce an Islamic law or issue an order to the Muslims. He was speaking of a matter of fact: That is the influence of Quraish and its effect on the rest of the Arab tribes.

The second hadith, like the first one, does not speak about the caliphate, nor about who should be the caliph. It is an information of a situation that existed at the time of the hadith.

As to the last six hadiths, they clearly speak of the caliphate. These hadiths vary in their contents without contradiction. Some of them state that the caliphate is in Quraish. Some of them add that the caliphate shall continue in Quraish until the end of the world. And some of them add that the caliphs are 12 and some of them mention that the number of the caliphs is 12 but do not mention that they are from Quraish.

To understand these hadiths, we have to put together the two hadiths of Abdullah Ibn Omar, in one of which he reported that the caliphate shall continue in Quraish to the end of the world, and in the other in which he reported that the number of caliphs is 12 like the representatives of the children of Israel. The two hadiths explain each other and agree with the hadith of Jaber Ibn Samorah which is the most specific among all these hadiths and capable of explaining the non-specific of them.

Thus, these hadiths inform us that the non-Qureshites shall not be caliphs and that the caliphs are only twelve, and that the caliphate will stay in Quraish as long as two people remain in this world.

These statements could be interpreted in one of the following ways:

### *Was the Prophet Predicting?*

1. The Prophet was not trying to instruct the Muslims and inform them of what they ought to do after him concerning the caliphate. He was, rather, speaking to them

about the future, forecasting that the caliphate shall stay in Quraish forever until the Day of Judgement. Thus, he informs us that the caliphate will never be interrupted as long as the people are living on the face of this earth and that every caliph shall be a Qureshite, and that the caliphs are to be twelve.

Of course, this would not be true because the caliphate was interrupted and discontinued and because many of the caliphs such as the Osmanites were neither Qureshites nor Arabs.

In addition to this, stating that the caliphs are twelve cannot be true whether it meant only the righteous caliphs or all of the caliphs including the non-righteous. For the number of righteous caliphs did not reach twelve, and if we add to them the number of non-righteous, their number is much higher than twelve.

### *Is the Qureshite Rule Hereditary?*

2. The second way of interpreting the above hadiths is that the Prophet was trying to issue instructions and communicate to the Muslims a religious command, so he told his nation that the caliphs after him have to be from Quraish and no one deserves to be a caliph except the Qureshites. This is because the Qureshites are related to the Messenger closely or remotely, for they join the Holy Prophet through their great-grandfather "Fihir Ibn Malik." By this, a Qureshite Muslim would be qualified to be a caliph and a non-Qureshite would not qualify.

If we adopt this interpretation, we would be admitting that the Islamic authority is by inheritance and that the right of inheritance would not be exclusive to the close relatives of the Holy Prophet. It is, rather, broad enough to include all the Qureshite clans who are descendants of "Fihir Ibn Malik."

To believe that the Qureshite Muslims are qualified for the caliphate for being close or remote relatives of the Prophet, is to subscribe to a theory of inheritance with which the Islamic law of inheritance does not agree. If the Islamic authority can be inherited through blood relation-

ship, the close relatives bar the remote relative from inheritance, according to the Islamic law.

Furthermore, the restriction of the number of caliphs to twelve becomes unjustifiable, for the righteous among the Qureshite caliphs did not reach the number of twelve and non-righteous among them were many more than twelve.

### *Are the Qureshites Superior?*

3. The third interpretation of the hadiths is that the Prophet through these statements was announcing a religious law which makes the caliphate an exclusive right of the Qureshites. This is not because they are related to him but because God preferred them to the non-Qureshites.

If we take this interpretation, we have to accept two contradictory concepts:

(a) The caliphate is not to be by the choice of the Muslims. It is, rather, by appointment from God, because He is the One Who decreed that the caliphs are to be Qureshites, whether people accept or reject.

(b) The faith of Islam invites its followers to believe in a tribal superiority and a Qureshite aristocracy whose members regardless of the extent of their faith are preferred by God to others, even if the others were more religious, wiser and more knowledgeable.

We say these two ideas are contradictory because if the caliphate is by a Divine decree, the Almighty is expected to choose for the leadership of the believers their wisest and most knowledgeable and righteous. It would be illogical to say that God prefers Abu Sufyan to Ammar Ibn Yasir, because Abu Sufyan fought Islam and the Prophet for twenty-one years, and Ammar fought with the Prophet for more than twenty-one years.

History remembers that the Holy Prophet stood on the day of conquest of Mecca and declared the following:

“O people of Quraish, certainly God has done away with the boastfulness of the pre-Islamic mentality and its pride of ancestors. People are from Adam, and Adam was



from soil." Then he recited the following verse: 'O mankind, certainly We have created you from a male and female and made you people and tribes, that you may recognize each other. The noblest among you in the eyes of God is the most righteous of you.' Thus, placing the Qureshites above others, not for anything except being Qureshites, is opposed to the Book of God and the teaching of the Holy Prophet in words and deeds.

Again, the restriction of the number of the caliphs to twelve would be unjustifiable for the same reason we mentioned before.

#### *Were the Men Chosen Only for their Righteousness?*

4. The fourth way of interpreting the hadiths is to say the Holy Prophet was trying to inform the Muslims that God had chosen men from Quraish to become caliphs. He did not choose these men because they were related to the Holy Prophet, nor because they were Qureshites. He chose them because they were the best among the Muslims. These men are the legitimate caliphs, whether people elect them or reject them.

*The six hadiths of the Qureshite caliphate clearly indicate that God did not leave to the Muslims a complete choice in selecting their caliphs.* He, rather, decreed that their caliphs have to come from Quraish. It would be illogical to believe that He did that because the Qureshites are relatives of the Messenger or because the Qureshites are better than the rest of the Muslims. This would be an invitation to the belief in an aristocracy alien to the faith of Islam which calls for equality, glorifies the righteous and despises the transgressor. The history of Islam attests that the majority of the Qureshites were the most hostile to the Messenger and his religion before they adopted Islam and less religious than others after they adopted Islam.

It would be only logical to say that the Qureshiteness of the caliphs is like the Qureshiteness of the Prophet himself. God did not choose Mohammad because he was from Quraish or because he was a Hashimite or from the children of Abdul-Muttalib or from Mecca. He chose him because he

was the best among the people of the earth, and it happened that the best of the people of the earth was a Qureshite, from the children of Abdul-Muttalib. And so the caliphs about whom the Holy Prophet spoke were chosen by God because they were the best of the people of the earth and it happened that they were from Quraish. This logical interpretation agrees with the Shi-ite Islamic School. When God chooses a man to become Imam of the people, he would be the Imam whether the muslims accept him or reject him, just as when God chooses a Prophet, he would be the Prophet even if people do not believe in his Prophethood.

### *Qureshites and Election Are Irreconcilable*

It is irreconcilable to say that God has decreed that the caliphs are to be from Quraish and that He left to the Muslims the matter of the selection of the caliphs from among the Qureshites.

God has decreed that the caliphs are to be from the Quraish in order to lead the Muslims to what is best for them. If he left the selection of the caliph from Quraish to the choice of the Muslims, He would leave the future of the caliphate to chance. Election by people does not secure the best leadership, for people do not know what is hidden in the hearts of individuals. God is the only One who knows that.

*Since God did not leave the caliphate entirely to the choice of the people and decreed that their caliphs are to be only from a particular group (the Qureshites) the entire choice must be His.* He would not divide the choice between Himself and the Muslims, leaving the selection of the tribe to Himself and the selection of the man from the tribe to the Muslims.

God is expected to choose the tribe for the sake of the individual and not to choose the individual for the sake of the tribe. *God has chosen Hashim and Quraish because of Mohammad, and He did not choose Mohammad because he was a Hashimite or Qureshite. Choosing the man rather than the clan is what secures the right leadership.* Thus, when God and His Messenger informed us that the caliphs

**are from Quraish, they were actually informing us that there are particular individuals who happened to be from Quraish, and were chosen by God to be caliphs. They were chosen because of their high qualifications and not because of their being Qureshites.**

## Ali Views the Succession

There is a theory that claims that the civil war which took place during the reign of Abu Bakr could have been avoided if Ali had succeeded the Prophet. This interesting theory (which I neither confirm nor deny) is based upon the following reasons:

1. The declaration of the Prophet at Ghadeer Khum while returning from his valedictory pilgrimage, made thousands of pilgrims believe that he had chosen Ali to succeed him.

What they understood from the declaration seemed to be consistent with their tradition which gives the authority to the closest relative of the leader. When they realized that the leadership had been handed to Abu Bakr after the death of the Prophet, some of them opposed the new government and refused to pay to it the "Zakat" (the Islamic tax). Others went further and deserted Islam, thinking that the companions have disobeyed the declaration of the Prophet. They thought that the companions were not serious in their adoption of Islam. And so the Arab tribes thought that they have the right to desert Islam and go back to paganism.

2. Had Ali been the ruler after the Prophet, his military reputation could have deterred anyone from challenging his leadership. The stories of his heroism were on every Arab's lips. The beduins as well as the settlers of villages and cities had experienced and witnessed his military actions during the last ten years of the life of the Prophet. Why should they take a risk of confronting him in a losing war?

Whether this theory is right or wrong, the civil war was

decisive concerning Ali. It obliged him to stop his opposition to Abu Bakr and pledge his support, lest the Muslim government be weakened in its struggle against the deserters of the faith. Ali was too pious to continue his opposition when dangers were threatening the foundation of Islam.

For several months the Imam Ali refused to join the electors of Abu Bakr, and he was expected to continue to do so. The civil war, however, made it mandatory for him to reverse his position.

The view of the Imam can be presented as follows:

1. He believed that the leadership is his exclusive right. He was the treasurer of the knowledge of the Prophet, his choice and his closest relative. It is reported that when Abu Bakr demanded from Ali to join his electors, Ali replied: "I have the right of leadership. I will not follow you when you ought to follow me." When Abu Bakr asked him: "Was not my election by the will of the people?" he replied: "But you told the Qureshites and the Medinites that you are entitled to the leadership because you are related to Mo-hammad, and they conceded to you. I have the same argu-ment against you." Then he said: "We have more right in the Messenger of God, alive and dead. We are the members of his House, the place of his confidence, the treasure of his knowledge and wisdom. No one from this nation can come close to the positions of the members of the House of Mo-hammad. And those who were indebted to their favor should not be equalized with them."<sup>1</sup> He said also:

"I am the executor of the Prophet, his minister and the trustee of his secrets and knowledge. . . I am the first one who believed in him, the most effective defender of Islam among you in combatting the pagans, the most knowledgeable in the Book of God and the teaching of the Prophet and most foreseer of the consequences of the events. For how long do you deny us the leadership? Give us justice, and acknowledge our rights as the Medinites did for you."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Abdul Fattah Abdul Maksoud, *Al-Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib*, Part 1, p. 179.

2. *Al-Tabersi, Al-Ihtijaj*, Part 1, p. 95.

Ali does not lack evidence on his executorship or ministerial posts. The Messenger conferred on him the post of executorship when he gathered his close relatives, ten years before the Hijrah. At that conference, the Prophet said to the members of his clan, while his hand on Ali's neck: "This is my brother, executor and successor in you. Listen to him and obey him." To his ministerial post, the authentically reported statement of the Prophet attests: "Ali, would you not be pleased to be to me like Aaron to Moses, but there shall be no Prophet after me?"

Aaron was the minister of Moses according to the Holy Qur'an: "And grant me a minister from the members of my house, Aaron my brother. Strengthen me by him, and make him a sharer in my mission."<sup>3</sup>

As to his trustworthiness on the secrets of the Messenger and his knowledge, it suffices to remember that the Messenger said: "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate. Whoever wishes to enter the city should come through the gate."

### *He Believed That Abu Bakr's Election Was Unbinding.*

2. The Imam viewed the election of Abu Bakr to be unbinding to his electors. Evidently he believed that the Messenger had chosen him to lead the nation and administer its affairs after him, and that the choice of the Prophet is binding to the nation. Thus, the nation does not have the right to choose another leader. Had not the Imam believed in this, he would not have allowed himself to ask the Medinites to reverse their position after they elected Abu Bakr. A sound election is a covenant to be fulfilled, and Ali was too righteous to call upon people to break a legitimate covenant.

He and his wife Fatimah "Al-Zahra" (the Lady of Light), daughter of the Prophet, visited the Medinite companions, seeking their support and asking them to reverse their position towards Abu Bakr.

Muaweyah in one of his letters to the Imam said:

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3. Holy Qur'an, Chapter 20, verses 28-31.

. . . “And I remember when you used to carry your wife at night on a donkey while your hands in the hands of your sons Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein, after Abu Bakr was elected. You called upon every Badrian and early Muslim to support you, and went with your wife to them, offering to them your two sons, and asking them their help against the companion of the Messenger of God. . . .”<sup>4</sup>

### *He Did not Want to Reach His Goal by Force*

3. In spite of his belief that his right was usurped, he did not try to regain it by force, nor did he want to damage the unity of the Muslims. The Imam realized that he does not have a strong support. The absolute majority of the Meccans were deadly against him. To them, he was the man who was responsible for the death of many of their fathers, brothers, sons and relatives in his defensive campaign for Islam. The Medinites were closer to him than the Qureshites, but they did not have the will to sacrifice for his leadership. They had already entered into a pact with Abu Bakr and they thought that this exacts from them their loyalty.

Ali had some support from some outstanding companions, such as Salman the Persian, Abu Tharr, Al-Bursa Ibn Azib, Ammar Ibn Yasir, Al-Miqdad, Ibn Al-Aswad and Al-Zubeir Ibn Al-Awam. But these companions did not have the following. Thus, the Imam found that patience was the only open avenue for him.

### *He Reversed His Position for the Sake of Unity*

He could have continued his opposition to Abu Bakr as long as Abu Bakr lived. Saad Ibn Abadah continued his opposition until Abu Bakr died. However, the movement of desertion of the faith by the Arab tribes was to him a decisive factor that made him reverse his attitude. His opposition to Abu Bakr was not motivated by a personal ambition. It was rather, motivated by his desire to set the

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4. Ibn Abu Al-Hadeed, his Commentaries on Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 1, p. 131.

Muslims on the true path of the Prophet. When Islam was threatened by the movement of desertion, Ali found it unwise to be concerned with the method of leading the Muslims when the very existence of Islam became endangered.

Al-Balathori recorded that when the Arabs deserted the faith of Islam, Othman came to Ali saying: "Cousin, no one will fight the enemy while you refuse to reconcile with Abu Bakr."<sup>5</sup> He convinced the Imam to go with him to Abu Bakr; when Abu Bakr saw the Imam, they hugged each other and cried. The Muslims were pleased with that and determined to fight the deserters of the faith.

Al-Bukhari, in his Sahih reported that the Imam said to Abu Bakr when they met: We recognize your position, and what God has given you, but you have taken over the leadership, without our consultation. We believe, that we have our share and right in the leadership, because of our relationship to the Messenger of God. Abu Bakr cried, they promised each other to meet at the Mosque, at night. Ali went to the Mosque and he told the people that he was not motivated in his opposition by a jealousy toward Abu Bakr nor by a denial of his position; but we believe, he said, that we have a right in this leadership, and he took it without consulting us. Thus, we felt uneasy."<sup>6</sup>

The Imam spoke of what took place in that period in a message he sent to the people of Egypt, when he sent to them Malik Al-Ashtar as a governor:

". . . And I withheld my hand until I found the deserters of the faith of Islam calling for the destruction of the religion of Mohammad. (As this danger emerged, I reversed my position) and decided to aid Islam and its followers, lest I witness a total or partial destruction in Islam, then the tragedy to me becomes greater than losing your leadership which is only transitory."<sup>7</sup>

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5. Sayed Murtadha Al-Asakari conveyed this in his book: *Abdullah Ibn Saba*, p. 73.

6. Al-Bukhari, his Sahih, Part 5, p. 108.

7. Nahjul-Balaghah, Part 3, pp. 198-199.



## Abu Bakr Names a Successor

Abu Bakr died, and a life filled with important achievements came to an end.

1. He subdued the deserters of the faith, and the withholders of the Zakat. He brought the Arab tribes back to Islam, and made them soldiers of Islam, after they became its adversaries.

2. Upon his order the verses and chapters of the revelations were gathered in the Book of Islam, the Holy Qur'an.

3. He pushed the faith of Islam beyond the borders of the Arabic Peninsula. He died while the Muslim forces were facing the Persian armies in Iraq and the Roman armies in Syria.

As Abu Bakr's death was drawing nigh, he chose to appoint a successor, and this was his right. He decided not to leave to chance the leadership of the state.

Had the history been logical, Ali would have succeeded Abu Bakr. He was by-passed after the death of the Prophet because the election was held hastily without planning and consultation. It is said that the emergency which was brought about by the conference of the Medinites at Saqifat Ranu Sa-idah, and the absence of Ali who was pre-occupied with the Holy Funeral made the companions overlook Ali and his qualifications.

If this were the fact, Ali should not have been overlooked at this time. There was no emergency and the Caliph was able to appoint whomever he chose. Yet, Ali was not chosen by the Caliph.

Quraish stood against him for many reasons, and his

high distinctions along with his close relationship to the Prophet were the main reason.

The Meccan clans went into costly wars against the Messenger of God because they did not want the Hashimites to have the exclusive honor of having the Prophet from among them. Having this attitude, they were not expected to let the Hashimites possess another exclusive honor by allowing Ali to succeed the Prophet.

The Qureshite influence grew rapidly during the reign of Abu Bakr. The rapid growth of the Qureshite influence was expected to increase the distance between Ali and the High Office.

One might say that Abu Bakr should not have followed the unfair attitude of Quraish toward Ali after he heard so many statements by the Prophet which indicated that Ali was his choice. But Abu Bakr seemingly did not believe that the statements of the Prophet concerning Ali made it mandatory for the Muslims to follow him. Had he believed that, he would not have allowed himself to be the First Caliph. Being of this opinion, he thought he had the option to choose Ali or any one from the outstanding companions. He did not choose Ali, because he was his main opponent. He chose Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, his strongest supporter, the planner of his election and his right hand in all affairs.

The reader may remember that when Ali reconciled with Abu Bakr, he complained of Abu Bakr's failure to consult him when he was elected and that he took from Ali what he was entitled to have. Abu Bakr listened to his complaint and wept. Abu Bakr's tears gave the impression that he would not repeat it. He was expected to consult Ali and the rest of the Hashimites, along with companions who were inclined towards him. Nothing of this took place.

It is worth noting that Fatimah Al-Zahra, daughter of the Prophet, was not on speaking terms with Abu Bakr, and she was urging the Medinites to shift from Abu Bakr to Ali. She was angry with Abu Bakr because of the caliphate and because he nationalized "Fadak." (a group of orchards) which she had received from her father and was supposed to keep for herself as a gift or a legacy. But Abu

Bakr reported that the Messenger said: We, the Prophets, do not leave inheritance.

Fatimah denied that her father said that, because this is opposed to the Holy Qur'an which declares that Suleiman (Solomon) received an inheritance from his father David. Both Solomon and his father were prophets.

Abu Bakr made efforts to normalize relations with her without reversing his position on Fadak, but she refused to speak to him, and when she died he was not informed of her death, lest he attend her funeral.<sup>1</sup>

Abu Bakr was very concerned with Fatimah's anger because the Prophet said: "Fatimah is a portion of me. Whoever displeases her displeases me." He also said: "Fatimah is the leader of the women of Paradise." (Both hadiths were reported by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih, section of virtues of Fatimah)."

With all this, the righteous Caliph would be expected to name Ali his successor, for this would please the Prophet because it pleased Fatimah, though belatedly.

Abu Bakr did not do that, nor did he consult Ali or any of the Hashimites including Al-Abbas, uncle of the Holy Prophet.

Indeed, Abu Bakr did not consult any companion about whom he should choose to succeed him. He did not give them a choice between two or more candidates. He consulted a few companions about Omar and Omar only. The consultants were Abdul-Rahaman Ibn Ouf, Othman Ibn Affan, and Osseid Ibn Hudheir. These were Omar's admirers and all of them were positive towards him. Talhah, Abu Bakr's cousin, was not consulted, and when he criticized Omar, Abu Bakr exploded in anger.

Why shouldn't we call the events by their names? Abu Bakr was indebted to Omar in his election and establishing his leadership. He was his right hand during the time of his caliphate. Abu Bakr wanted to return to his good friend

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1. Al-Bukhari reported it in his Sahih, Part 5, p. 178. Muslim also reported it in his Sahih, Part 12, "Hukm of Al-Fei" (The wealth which is acquired from enemies of Islam), p. 77.

his favor. We say this, not trying to minimize the sincerity of the First Caliph.

While he was dying, Abu Bakr commanded Othman to write his will. When he reached the following words: "I have appointed as a successor," he fainted before mentioning the name of his appointee. When he woke up, he asked Othman to read what he wrote, and to the surprise of Abu Bakr, Othman had added the name of Omar. Abu Bakr was very pleased with that.

Of course the new Caliph was more pleased with Othman. He remembered this favor for Othman. He rewarded him by a similar favor at the end of his reign.

## Omar Succeeds

Omar came to power as the Second Caliph 14 years after the Hijrah (635 AD). He proved to be the most effective among the caliphs in directing the policy of the Muslim World and its events.

The period of his leadership was full of spectacular accomplishments and conspicuous events. If the policy of a head of state has domestic and foreign aspects, Omar's policy had all that, plus past and future aspects, for its influence went beyond the boundaries of his own reign, with far-reaching consequences.

The success of his external policy was dazzling to the eyes of the historians, Muslim and non-Muslim alike. He inherited from his predecessor, Abu Bakr, a World-War against the two great empires of his time: The Persian and the Roman empires.

The Muslim forces, during his reign, faced the Persian armies and were able to place Iraq and Persia, including Al-Ahwaz and Azarbaijan, under the dominion of Islam. The Muslim forces on the North Western front were able to defeat the Romans and bring Syria and Egypt into the Islamic Jurisdiction.

Thus, under his leadership, Muslim armies were able to disintegrate the two prominent empires of his time. The spiritual conquest which accompanied the military conquest was the greater of the two. His policy towards the non-Muslim inhabitants of the conquered lands was fair. He levied taxation on the conquered land, plus a personal taxation on the adult males. None of the followers of other religions were oppressed during his reign. He recognized their natural rights and freedoms. History recorded his word as directed to Amr Ibn Al-Aus, who was his appointed

governor of Egypt whose son hit a Coptic Christian: "Amr, when did you enslave people after they were born free?"

*His domestic policy* was mostly successful. It may be summed up as follows: In relation to his family; in relation to Muslims in general; in relation to his colleagues of the companions of the Prophet; and in relation to the members of the House of the Prophet.

*In relation to himself and his family*, his policy was ideal. Hundreds of millions of dirhams (a dirham of his time is equivalent to a dollar of our time) were pouring into the treasury of the Islamic State. Though he had unlimited authority, he and his family lived in poverty. It is reported that he said: "I deal with the Muslims' treasury as I deal with a fund of an orphan. If I am in no need, I will not touch it; and if I am in need, I only satisfy my necessity."<sup>1</sup>

*In relation to the Muslims* in general, his policy was characterized as just, firm, and helpful. He sufficiently provided for the soldiers, their families, and the inhabitants of Medina, plus many others.

*As to his relation to the companions*, he allotted to them according to the record of their participation in the defense of Islam. Trying to prevent the companions' temptation of wealth or fearing the use of their brilliant record for advancing their influence, he prevented the companions from residing in any city other than Medina. "I am standing at the mouth of Al-Harrah (the entrance of Medina), he said, holding the Qureshites' throats and belts, lest they fall into the fire."<sup>2</sup> Thus, he kept the ambitious companions of the Prophet under his watchful eyes.

*In relation to the members of the House of the Prophet*, his policy was mixed with admiration and caution. He did not grant any governmental post to any of them. However, the tension between him and Ali which started after the death of the Prophet and continued during the period of

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1. Ibn Saad, *Al-Tabaqat*, Part 3, p. 276.

2. Abdul-Fattah Abdul-Maqsoud, *Al-Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib*, Part 1 p. 223.

Abu Bakr, abated and gradually was replaced by a friendship which grew by the passage of time. Omar used to resort to Ali's counsel in important events, seeking solutions of serious problems.

When he was informed that the Persian government had mobilized an extremely huge army to fight the Muslims, he wanted to attend the battle in order to strengthen the morale of the Islamic army. When he consulted the Imam Ali and other companions, the Imam told him:

"The Islamic cause did not triumph or retreat by a great or small number. It is the religion of God Who made it prevalent and His host which He prepared and extended until it reached what it reached and appeared as it appeared. We are promised by God and He will fulfill His promise and help His Host. The place of the leader is the place of the string in the beads. It collects them and makes them join each other. If the string breaks, the beads will scatter and never rejoin each other completely. Though the Arabs today are few compared to others, they are numerous through Islam and strong by their unity. Be like an axis of a mill, let the mill go around and let the Arabs participate in the war without your presence. If you leave, you will leave behind you dangers which will be of more concern to you than what you will face.

"If the Persians see you on the battlefield, they will say: 'This is the source of the danger. If you destroy him, you will triumph.' Their war will be more intensive and their hope in defeating the Muslims will grow higher.

"As to what you mentioned of the Persian march to fight the Muslims, God the Almighty hates their march more than you do, and He is more capable of changing what He dislikes. As to what you have mentioned of their great number, we never fought by quantity. We fought only by the help of God and His assistance."<sup>3</sup>

### *Omar and Ali's Knowledge*

Omar was deeply impressed with Ali's profound knowledge. It is reported that he said: "No one should give any

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3. Al-Sayed Al-Radhi, Nahjul-Balaghah, Part 2, pp. 29-30.

verdict at the Mosque (of the Prophet) when Ali is present." When he made wrong decisions in Islamic rules, Ali used to correct him. He repeatedly said: "Had Ali not been present, Omar would have perished (spiritually)."<sup>4</sup> He expressed his serious need to Ali's knowledge by saying: "May God not keep me to a problem when Abu Hassan (Ali) is not available."

A lady was accused of adultery because she gave birth to a child six months after she married. Omar decided to stone her. Ali said to him: "Leader of the Believers, if she appeals to the Book of God, contesting your decision, she will prevail against you." God says: "Pregnancy and nursing periods are thirty months." Again He says: "Mothers nurse their children two complete years for whoever wants a complete nursing." If we subtract twenty four months from thirty, the balance would be six months. Omar reversed his position, and let the lady go free.

Ali at one time was with Omar while others were present. When he left, one of them criticized Ali and accused him of pride and conceit. Omar said: "A man like Ali is entitled to be proud. By God, without his sword the pillar of Islam could not have been erected. He is the highest magistrate in the nation, its earliest Muslim, and its most honorable."<sup>5</sup> When the critic asked what prevented him from giving him the leadership after the death of the Prophet, Omar replied: "We did not like his young age, and his love to his clan."

However, this does not mean that Omar used to consult Ali in all affairs or follow all his opinions in religion. Omar was extremely independent. Sometimes, he appeared as if he were in disagreement with the Prophet. The Messenger made the duty of any pilgrim who did not accompany animals of sacrifice to perform a pilgrimage of "Tamattu" (in which the pilgrim takes leave of restrictions which are im-

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4. Abdul-Fattah Abdul-Maqsoud, *Al-Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib*, Part 1, p. 226.

5. Ibn Abu Al-Hadeed, *his Commentaries on Nahjul-Balaghah*, Vol. 3, p. 179.



posed at the start of the Pilgrimage). The Prophet commanded such a person to make the seven circuits around the Kaaba and the seven walks between Al-Safa and Al-Marwah; then it would be legal for him to approach his wife before he resumed his pilgrimage again before leaving for Arafat.

The Prophet also legalized the temporary marriage. Omar chose to prohibit both, and to punish severely whoever married a woman for a limited period. Muslim in his Sahih reported that Abu Nudrah said the following:

“Ibn Abbass (a cousin of the Prophet) used to legalize “Muta” (temporary marriage) and Ibn Al-Zubeir used to prohibit it. When I mentioned that to Jabir Ibn Abdullah (a prominent companion of the Prophet), he said: In my presence the following took place”:

We practiced the temporary marriage during the days of the Prophet. . . . When Omar came to power he said: God used to legalize to His Messenger whatever He chose, through whatever He chose. The Qur’an was revealed to regulate our life. You have to complete your pilgrimage and the Omrah (which precedes the pilgrimage) as God commanded you to do (without terminating the regular restrictions before going to Arafat). Desist from marrying women for a limited time. If a man married a woman for a limited time and is brought to me, I shall stone him (to death).”<sup>6</sup>

This opinion of the Second Caliph, concerning pilgrimage, seems to be in a clear conflict with the Holy Qur’an:

“And when you are in safety, any pilgrim, who at the “Omrah” (the devotional part that precedes going to Arafat) satisfies his carnal desires (after terminating the state of restriction) until the resumption of pilgrimage, he should offer what is easily available of sacrificial animal. If he can not, he should fast three days during the pilgrimage and seven when you have returned; that is ten in all. That is for the one whose family is not residing at the Inviolable place of worship.” Chapter 2, verse 196.

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6. Muslim in his Sahih, Part 8, p. 169.

The hadith, however clearly indicates that temporary marriage was legal during the time of the Prophet, and that he did not Prohibit it after legalizing it. Had the Messenger prohibited such a marriage, the Second Caliph would have reminded the companions of that prohibition. His saying: "Desist from marrying a woman for a limited time" tells us that the companions were still practicing the temporary marriage during his time. Otherwise, he would not have commanded them to stop that practice. Had the Messenger prohibited such a practice after he legalized it, the companions would not have continued to practice it, and the Second Caliph would not have had to admonish them and threaten to stone those who practiced such a marriage.

As to the pilgrimage of "Tamattu," the Messenger in his valedictory pilgrimage said while he was in Mecca:

"Had I been at the beginning of my pilgrimage, I would not have accompanied the sacrificial animals, and I would have made it Omrah (separate from the pilgrimage by termination of the restrictions of the Ihram). Whoever did not accompany sacrificial animals, should terminate his Ihram and make it Omrah." Suraqah Ib Malik Ibn Jaasham, stood up and said to the Messenger: Is it for our present year exclusively or forever? The Messenger put the fingers of his two hands between each other and said: "The Omrah entered into the pilgrimage (repeating that twice). It is not for this year. It is forever."<sup>7</sup>

Thus, the extreme independence of the Second Caliph had made him prohibit the pilgrimage of Al-Tamattu and legalize killing the practicer of temporary marriage. Yet the Messenger commanded the Muslims to make the pilgrimage of Al-Tamattu and legalized temporary marriage.

A man so extremely independent in his opinion would not be expected to consult the Imam Ali in every problem or follow all his opinions. However, he considered Ali to be the most knowledgeable among the companions and the highest authority on religion.

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7. Muslim, Sahih Muslim, Part 8, pp. 172-179.

## DIALOGUES ABOUT THE CALIPHATE

The relationship between the Caliph and the Imam continued to improve, and finally Omar married Om Kulthoum, daughter of the Imam. In spite of these improvements, history, as far as I know, does not record any dialogue between the Caliph and the Imam concerning the caliphate. But the Caliph had several dialogues with Abdullah Ibn Abbass (a cousin of the Prophet and the Imam), concerning the disagreement between the Imam and himself. In most of these dialogues, Omar appeared to be satisfied with what took place. One of the dialogues went as follows:

Omar: “. . . The Qureshite community was unwilling to let you (the Hashimites) have the honor of both the caliphate and the Prophethood, lest you compromise the right of your community. Quraish chose for itself. It succeeded and made the right decision.”

Ibn Abbass: “. . . You said that the Qureshites were unwilling to let us have the honor of both the caliphate and the Prophethood. But the Almighty described some people as “resentful” when he said: ‘Because they resented what God had revealed, God nullified their deeds.’ You said that the Qureshite community chose for itself and that it succeeded and made the right decision. Had they chosen for themselves what God chose for them, the right would have been on their side, neither objected to, nor envied. . . .”<sup>8</sup>

In another dialogue Omar told Ibn Abbas the following: “There were high words from the Messenger of God (concerning Ali). But those words did not constitute a clear evidence for his leadership, nor did they eliminate all excuses (for those who did not side with him). The Messenger was trying to give Ali the leadership. He wanted to record his name when he was in his ailment, but I prevented him from doing that, for the interest of Islam. By the Lord of the Ka-abah, Quraish will never rally around him. Had

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8. Ibn Al-Atheer, in his book *Al-Kamil*, Part 3, p. 31.

he come to power after the death of the Prophet, the Arabs would have revolted against him.”<sup>9</sup>

In another dialogue, the following conversation took place:

Omar: “Son of Abbass, this man has exerted himself in worship until he had become lean, trying to show his piety.”

Ibn Abbass: “Who is that man?”

Omar: “That is your cousin (Ali).”

Ibn Abbass: “What does he gain by showing his piety?”

Omar: “He wants to present himself for the caliphate.”

Ibn Abbass: “The Prophet nominated him for the caliphate and he did not attain it.”

Omar: “He was in his youth, and the Arabs thought that he was too young. But now he has reached the age of maturity. Did you not know that God never sent a Prophet before the age of forty?”

Ibn Abbass: “People of wisdom and good judgement regard him perfect and mature since God heightened the light of Islam. But they consider him deprived and unlucky.”

Omar: “He will reach it after difficulties, then his foot will slip and he will not reach his aim. Abdullah, you will witness that. Then the dawn will appear to anyone who has two eyes. Then you will know the soundness of the opinion of the early migrant companions who diverted the leadership away from him.”<sup>10</sup>

In another dialogue, Omar appeared to have remorse for the way in which Ali was treated. He said to Ibn Abbass while they were walking on one of the streets of Medina, holding hands:

Omar: “I think that your man (Ali) was treated unjustly.”

Ibn Abbass: “Amir Al-Mu’mineen (leader of the Believers), give him back his right.”

Omar took his hand away from the hand of Ibn Ab-

bass, and left while talking to himself angrily. Then he stood and called Ibn Abbass. When Ibn Abbass came to him, Omar said:

“What prevented the Qureshites from giving him the leadership was his age. They thought he was too young.”

Ibn Abbass replied: “By God, neither God nor His Messenger considered him too young when they commanded him to take the chapter of “Bara-ah” from your man (Abu Bakr) when he was setting out, taking with him Bara-ah to announce it in the pilgrimage.”

Upon this, the Caliph turned away from Ibn Abbass and left hurriedly.<sup>11</sup>

In another conversation with Ibn Abbass, Omar appeared to be milder than usual. He said to Ibn Abbass:

“. . . You may think that Abu Bakr was the first one who pushed you (the Hashimites) back. He did not mean that. Something emerged and there was no wiser way for him to take than the path he took. Had he not had his opinion about me, he would have given you your share of the leadership. Had he done that, your people (the Qureshites) would not make you enjoy the leadership. . . . They look at you as a bull looking at his butcher.”<sup>12</sup>

## THE DIMENSIONS OF OMAR'S POLICY

The attitude of the Second Caliph towards Quraish and its line of thinking was far-reaching in its consequences. We can see its effects in the events that took place before and after his reign where it directed the future policies of the Muslim World to a great extent.

His influence was visible during the days of Abu Bakr. He was the man behind his election and his strongest supporter and the most effective person in establishing his leadership.

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9, 10 and 11 are recorded by Ibn Abu Al-Hadeed, Commentaries on Nahjul-Balagha, Part 3, pp. 97, 105, and 155.

12. Ibn Abu Al-Hadeed recorded this dialogue in his Commentaries on Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 3, p. 94.

The following anecdote shows the extent of his influence during the days of Abu Bakr:

Oyeinah Ibn Hissn and Al-Aqra Ibn Habis came to Abu Bakr and said: "Caliph of the Messenger of God: There is a piece of unproductive land, void of herb and useless. We request that you give it to us, so we may till it and plant in it. God may benefit us through it in the future." Abu Bakr consulted the companions around him. As they counseled him positively on the matter, he wrote a document, signed it, and the witnessing companions also signed it. Then he handed it to the two men.

Since Omar was not present among the companions, the two men went to him to have his signature on the document. As they found him busy applying tar on a camel, they informed him that the Caliph had given them a document and that they came to have his signature. They asked him if he would like to read it or they should read it to him. He told them to read it to him. As he heard it, he took the document, spat on it and erased the writing. The two men exploded in anger and made uncomplimentary remarks. He told them that the Messenger of God used to appease them when the faith of Islam was not in strength. God had strengthened Islam. "Go away," he said to them, "and do whatever is in your power." They went back to Abu Bakr complaining, and said to him: "We do not know who is the ruler. Is it you or Omar?" Abu Bakr replied: "He is if he wants to be."

When Omar came, the following dialogue between him and Abu Bakr took place:

Omar: "Tell me of this land which you gave to the two men. Is it yours or does it belong to all Muslims?"

Abu Bakr: "It belongs to all Muslims."

Omar: "What made you give this land to these two men, excluding the rest of the Muslims?"

Abu Bakr: "I consulted the companions around me and they agreed."

Omar: "Have you consulted all the Muslims and acquired their consent?"

Abu Bakr: "I had told you that you are more capable

than I in handling the nation's affairs, but you prevailed against me (and made me the Caliph)."<sup>13</sup>

It is difficult to understand how Omar expected Abu Bakr to consult all the Muslims in giving a piece of unproductive land, while he did not consult all the Muslims in giving Abu Bakr the leadership. The leadership was more important to the Muslims than a piece of land. However, the event tells us of the magnitude of his influence during the time of Abu Bakr.

His influence extended not only to the time of Abu Bakr. It was also visible at the ailment of the Messenger himself. The readers of the Sahihs know that the Prophet wanted during his ailment to write a document to assure that the nation would not go astray. Omar opposed writing such a document, and said that the Prophet was overpowered with his ailment or that he was hallucinating. By his objection, the Muslims were deprived of the Prophet's document which was expected to illuminate for the nation the path of its future and provide it with security against straying.

## PRE-ARRANGED THE FUTURE OF THE MUSLIMS

*The influence of his policy in directing the future of the Muslim world* can be clearly seen in many decisions which he took while thinking that they were in the interest of the nation. But they were fraught with grave consequences. The following are only a few of those decisions:

1. *He did away with the method of the Prophet* (which Abu Bakr followed) of distributing the public funds among the Muslims equally. When Omar was questioned about his uneven distribution, he said "I will not equalize the ones who fought the Messenger with the one who fought with the Messenger."

He allocated to every companion who attended the Battle of Badr an annual salary of five thousand dirhams; and to every participant in the Battle of Ohod four thou-

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13. Ibn Abu Al-Hadeed, his Commentaries on Nahjul-Balaghah, Vol. 3, pp. 108-109.

sands. He gave the child of a Badrian two thousands, except Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein. He equalized them with their father Ali because of their relation to the Prophet. He allotted twelve thousand Dirhams for each one of the wives of the Prophet.

To those who migrated before the surrender of Mecca, he allotted three thousand dirhams and to those who adopted Islam at the time of the surrender of Mecca two thousands each. Then he made the rest of the Muslims one category, giving them 25 dinars a year, or according to their religious positions, their reading of the Holy Qur'an and their endeavor in the defense of Islam.

He allotted to the Yemenites and the Qaisites who were in military service in Iraq and Syria salaries ranging between two and three thousands. He made the minimum of their salaries three hundred dirhams.<sup>14</sup>

The Caliph was motivated by good intentions when he preferred the early Muslims and the defenders of Islam. He had a very justifying reason in preferring the relatives of the Messenger, and he should have given them more than he did, because they were entitled at least to the sixth of the fifth of the spoils of war, according to the Holy Qur'an:

“And know that whatever you may gain, a fifth of it belongs to God, His Messenger, the relatives, the orphans, the needy, and the wayfarer, if you do believe in God and what We revealed to Our servant, on the day of decisive event when the two forces confronted each other, And God has power over everything.”<sup>15</sup>

However, it is very difficult to justify religiously his preference of the Badrians over the Ohdians and the Ohdians over those who embraced Islam before the surrender of Mecca and those who embraced Islam on the days of its surrender over those who adopted Islam later. We cannot justify such preferences after the Messenger of God distributed the Islamic funds equally among the Muslims.

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14. Ibn Saad in his *Al-Tabaqat*, Part 3, pp. 296-297.

15. Chapter 8, verse 41.



It was a beautiful poetic statement on the part of the Caliph when he said: "I will not equalize the ones who fought the Messenger with those who fought with him," and it would have been very sound, if he preferred the early Muslims, by glorifying them and placing them spiritually above others.

Preference in fund-distribution could also be permitted if the funds belonged to the Caliph personally. But it was an injustice to give to one category more than others from a fund owned by all Muslims equally. The allowance with which he preferred the early Muslims was owned by the rest of the Muslims, and he took it away from them without their permission.

Had the allowance been deserved by the preferred categories, the Messenger would have given it to them rather than to the rest of the Muslims. Otherwise, he would be distributing among all Muslims what belonged to the earlier Muslims.

Thus, we should either say that the Messenger had deprived the early Muslims from what they deserved of allowance or that Omar deprived the majority of the Muslims from their right in the allowance with which he privileged the early Muslims. Which theory should we choose?

### *Undesirable Consequences*

Whether inequality in distribution was legal or illegal, it certainly led to the creation of a new wealthy class among the Muslims. The minority which benefited from the preference acquired much more than it needed for spending. Thus, the members of such a minority were able to invest their surplus money in purchasing and selling properties and in trade.

As a result, the Muslim Society was divided into an extremely wealthy class and another class that could satisfy its needs without prosperity and a third class, deprived and unable to acquire the necessary food and clothes. However the consequences of this division in the society did not appear violent during the reign of Omar.

In fact, the Second Caliph witnessed the signs of the

evils of this division at the end of his reign when he said with an obvious remorse: "Should I be given the opportunity to do it again, I would take the surplus fund of the wealthy and return it to the poor." But time was not on his side. He died before he could rectify the situation.

It is worthy to note that the preferred classes enjoyed what they had acquired and believed that they were religiously entitled to what they acquired. When the Imam came to power and wanted to go back to the method of the Prophet and to return to the deprived people what belonged to them, the privileged minority revolted against him. They used all the means at their disposal in combatting him to preserve their privilege. Why not? They had enjoyed those prerogatives for over twenty years, and to them they became natural rights.

### SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS IN THE CALIPH'S REGIME

Overlooking the obvious risks, the Second Caliph placed in high positions politically ambitious and religiously unscrupulous men from Quraish. This led to many grave consequences after his death.

#### *Ibn Al-Auss*

He appointed Amr Ibn Al-Auss governor of Egypt. Before he professed Islam, Amr was extremely hostile and harassing to the Prophet. He lambasted the Holy Prophet with seventy verses of poetry.

Belatedly, Amr chose to become a Muslim after he foresaw through his wiliness and intelligence that the Prophet and his followers would have the upper hand.

The conspiracy of Amr appeared later when he became a leading agitator against Othman, after Othman dismissed him and replaced him with Abdullah Ibn Sarh. He continued his malicious campaign until Othman was assassinated. Then he used Othman's assassination for his own unholy goal. He became the second man in the aggressor party which fought Ali, the Imam of the truth, with the

pretext of avenging the blood of Othman whose death was brought about by the agitation of Amr and others like him.

### *The Omayyads In*

The Second Caliph appointed Muaweyah, son of Abu Sufyan, as the governor of Damascus. He appointed his brother Yazeed Ibn Abu Sufyan the governor of Jordan. When Yazeed died the Second Caliph added Jordan to the area of Muaweyah's rule.<sup>16</sup>

By this, the power of Muaweyah began to grow politically and militarily. During the reign of Omar, Muaweyah became important enough to be feared and reckoned with. When Omar was stabbed, he said to the members of the Electoral Convention according to what Ibn Abbas reported: ". . . And if you exchange jealousy and hatred and refuse to co-operate with each other, Muaweyah will snatch the authority from your hands."<sup>17</sup>

### *The Hashimites Out*

The Second Caliph did not put any of the Hashimites in any position of power, though they had efficient men such as Ibn Abbas. Omar was asked why he did not give him a governorship of a province in spite of his knowledge and capability. The Caliph expressed his apprehension that Ibn Abbas might make his own interpretation of the Islamic rule.

Evidently, the Second Caliph thought that Ibn Abbas might legalize for himself or his relatives to take some of what God allotted for relatives of the Prophet in the Holy Qur'an of the fifth of the spoils.

The Caliph, seemingly, kept the Hashimites away from high offices of any Islamic provinces, lest they gain some popularity in those areas. He thought that people of those provinces might glorify them because they were from the clan of the Holy Prophet.

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16. Dr. Taha Hussein, *Al-Fitnat Al-Kubra*, Part 1, p. 118.

17. Ibn Abu Al-Hadeed in his *Commentaries on Nahjul-Balaghah*, Vol. 1, p. 62.

With his love for God and His Messenger, the Caliph was expected to keep the Omayyads out of his regime because of their opposition towards the Prophet. He was also expected to give the Hashimites substantial positions in his regime for the sake of the Prophet. Contrary to all expectations, the Second Caliph kept the Hashimites out and brought the Omayyads in and kept them there.

The Caliph kept Muaweyah in his position in spite of what he knew of his ambition and of what he witnessed of growth of his power. He kept him for the duration of his reign, contrary to his method of dismissing his appointed governors and replacing them with others.

The Caliph, seemingly, was impressed with Muaweyah's administrative ability and his efficiency in policing his borders, which neighbored the Roman Empire. Yet, Omar used to believe that the victory of the Muslims and their success did not depend on a person or persons, regardless of their ability, for God aids the Muslims by the power of Islam, rather than the power of persons. He dismissed Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed from the command of the Syrian front after he became extremely popular. He replaced him by Abu Obeidah Ibn Al-Jarrah who was relatively unknown, to make the Muslims realize that God would help them without need for the leadership of Ibn Al-Waleed.

The Caliph might have been lulled by the obedience of Muaweyah to him. Thus, he wanted to benefit from his intelligence and administrative ability, and Muaweyah did not represent a threat to him. The Second Caliph had a very strong personality, and none of the Muslims could dare challenge him.

The obedience of Muaweyah to him, however, should not have made him forget what he knew of the danger of the Omayyads to the future of Islam. For Omar heard from the Messenger what should have alienated him from them. He said to Ibn Abbas that he heard the Messenger of God saying:

"The children of Omayyad will ascend to my pulpit, and I saw them in my dream jumping on my pulpit like monkeys." And about them the following verse was revealed:

“And We made the vision which We have shown thee only a faith-testing trial for the people, and (the men you were shown are) the tree which is cursed in the Holy Qur’an.”<sup>18</sup>

Omar said also to Al-Mugheerah Ibn Shubah (who was one-eyed): “Mugheerah, have you ever seen anything through your eye after you lost it?” When Mugheerah answered in the negative, Omar said to him: “By God, the children of Omayad will make Islam lose its eye as your eye was lost: Then they will blind Islam until it will not be able to know where to go or where to come.”<sup>19</sup>

### *The Omayad's Reign Was Not Inevitable*

Probably what the Caliph heard from the Messenger concerning the children of Omayad made him believe that their coming to power was pre-destined and inevitable. Therefore, he allowed himself to walk in this path which placed the Omayads readily in power. Thus, he did that while submitting to what he thought to be a pre-destined future.

Probably his belief that the arrival of the Omayads to the high office was inevitable made him say to Ibn Abbas that Ali shall arrive to the caliphate after a serious confusion, then his foot will slip and he will not accomplish his aim. Then he said to Ibn Abbas:

“Abdullah, you will be a witness, and the morning will be clear to anyone who has two eyes, then you will know the soundness of the opinion of the early migrants who diverted the caliphate from him.”

Of course, the arrival of the children of Omayad to power became conceivable and expected after they became an important part of the Islamic regime and after their most intelligent became the governor of a highly important part

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18. Ibn Abdul-Hadeed, his Commentaries on Nahjul-Balaghah, Vol. 2, p. 376. There are more hadiths recorded by the Imam Al-Razi in his “Commentaries on the Holy Qur’an,” Chapter 17, Part 5, pp. 413-414.

19. Ibn Abu Al-Hadeed, Commentaries on Nahjul-Balaghah, Vol. 2, p. 277.

of the Muslim State. The presence of Muaweyah and his like in positions of power was expected to be an important obstacle which Ali would face if he were to come to power.

As a matter of fact, the difficulties and obstacles were steadily increasing and accumulating during Omar's reign and continued to increase after his death until it became impossible for Ali to rule peacefully.

This was not due to a weakness in Ali, but it was due to the events which took place before his arrival to power. These events were not inevitable, for those events were made by man and his will, and were not pre-destined by God. Had Omar not placed Muaweyah in a position of power or had he not kept him in power, Muaweyah would not have become an obstacle in Ali's path, for without the governorship of Syria, Muaweyah would have been an ordinary man.

#### *What the Prophetic Word Meant*

What the Holy Messenger said about his vision, in which he saw the children of Omayyad reaching the pulpit of the Holy Prophet, was a warning to the nation to take a road that will not lead to this consequence. But the nation took the road which brought the Omayyads to that pulpit.

The Holy Messenger informed the nation that his grandson Al-Hussein would be killed, and that Ali would fight those who breached the covenant, the aggressor party and the Kharijites (seceders). He also informed Ali that the nation would betray him. He informed Al-Zubeir that he would fight Ali unjustly. He informed the mother of believers, Ayeshah, that she would be barked at by the dogs of Al-Hou-ab, while she is deviating from the right road. He also informed the Muslims that the aggressor party would kill Ammar Ibn Yasir.

The Holy Prophet did not inform the Muslims of all these events to tell them that they were pre-destined from God. He did not mean to tell the Muslims that the predicted events were inevitable and that the will of man would not be a factor in bringing them or preventing them.

Had he meant that, then the disobedients, the sinners,

the murderers, the breachers of the covenants and the aggressors would not be blamable. What the Messenger wanted to say was that these expected events which saddened him would take place as a result of wrong choices by the nation, or by some of its leaders.

The attitude of the Prophet in forecasting these events is like the attitude of a physician who warns a physically weak person of what will happen to him if he does not take preventive measures which he prescribes to him.

If the patient refuses to take the preventive medicine, then he becomes ill, his illness would not be a result of predestination, nor would it be inevitable. His illness would be the result of his own failure and mis-choice.

The Messenger forecast these ugly events which he expected and prescribed to the nation the right measure to prevent their occurrence, namely, the adherence to the Book of God and the teachings of the members of his House. He told the Muslims that the adherence to these two elements represented a security for the nation against the ugly events and all deviations of any kind. The nation, however, did not heed the warning of the Holy Prophet, nor could it appreciate the seriousness of his statements and its dimensions. It took a different road which led to those evil events.

For this, I believe that the Second Caliph was wrong when he said to Ibn Abbas that morning would appear to anyone who has two eyes and that Ibn Abbas himself would be a witness and discover the soundness of the opinion of the early migrants who diverted the caliphate from Ali.

The fact is that what happened to Ali did not prove the soundness of the opinion of the early migrants. Rather, it proved that they had committed a costly and terrible mistake. Had they not diverted the caliphate from Ali after the death of the Holy Prophet, the clouds would not have accumulated in his horizon, nor could those obstacles and difficulties have accumulated in his road.

Ali could have arrived to a peaceful reign even after the caliphate was diverted from him twice. Had the Second Caliph used his tremendous influence in taming the Qure-

shites and directing them towards Ali, Ali would have achieved his goal. Had he kept the Omayyads out of his regime and avoided the creation of the preferred class of early companions through his unequal distribution of public funds, Ali would not have had serious problems.

Even after all these events took place, Ali could have had a peaceful rule if Omar had named him as a successor or formed the Electoral Convention of members with a positive attitude towards Ali, rather than Othman. Had Ali succeeded in coming to power peacefully, the Muslims would have been avoided all the faith-testing crises to which the death of Othman led.



## The Electoral Convention

The Second Caliph was assassinated while praying to his Lord at the Mosque of the Holy Prophet (in Medina). By his assassination, the life of one of the giants of history came to an end. His reign did not exceed a decade, yet it was filled with events that changed the course of history. His life ended, yet his influence did not come to an end. He did not die before he pushed the nation to a future pregnant with important events, the key of which was the Electoral Convention which he formed while he was on his deathbed.

Muslim in his Sahih reported that Abdullah Ibn Omar said to his father: "They allege that you are not willing to name a successor. If you have a shepherd for your camels or sheep, and he came back to you, leaving them without a shepherd, you would consider him negligent. Shepherding people is more important than shepherding animals."

Abdullah said: "My words seemed to appeal to him. He put his head down for a while, then he raised it, saying: 'If I do not name a successor, I will be following the example of the Messenger. If I name a successor, I will be following the example of Abu Bakr.'"<sup>1</sup>

The Caliph refused at the beginning to name anyone. Al-Tabari and Ibn Al-Atheer reported that Omar was advised to appoint one after him, but he said: "Had Abu-Obediah Ibn Al-Jarrah been alive, I would have appointed him. If God questions me, I will say: 'I heard Thy Prophet saying: "Abu Obediah is the trustworthy of this nation."

"Had Salim Moula Abu Hutheifa been alive, I would

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1. Muslim in his Sahih, Part 2, p. 206.

have appointed him. If God questions me, I shall tell Him: 'I heard Thy Prophet saying: "Salim is a strong lover of God." Omar refused to appoint his son Abdullah for the high office, saying: "How can I appoint a man who was unable to divorce his wife, or, he said, does not know how to divorce his wife?"'<sup>2</sup>

### *Six Nominees*

Once again, he was urged to appoint a successor, but he refused, saying: "After I said my last word, I decided to choose a man who is the most qualified to lead you to the right road (pointing to Ali). Then I fainted, and in my swoon, I saw a man entered a garden. He picked every fresh and ripe of its fruits, taking them for himself, and putting them under him. I realized that God had decreed something and He will prevail. I did not want to shoulder its responsibility, dead and alive. I recommend to you these six men for whom the Prophet testified to be from the people of Paradise: Ali, Othman, Abdul-Rahman, Saad Ibn Abu Waqass, Al-Zubeir Ibn Al-Awam, and Talhah Ibn Obeidullah. These men should select a caliph from among them. If they choose one, you should co-operate with him and help him."

When Ali and his relatives left the Caliph's house, Abbas (the Prophet's uncle) advised Ali not to enter into that convention. Ali said: "I dislike dissention." Abbas replied: "And you will have what you dislike." However, the Caliph did not elaborate on the matter, nor did he define the method by which the caliph should be selected from these six men.

### *Procedural Instructions*

On the second day, the Caliph defined the method of election. He said to those who were present of the six men: "When I die, deliberate for three days, and Suheib should lead the prayer. The fourth day should not come before you

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2. Ibn Al-Atheer, *Al-Kamil*, Part 3, p. 34. (Printed by Dar Al-Kitab Al-Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon.)

elect a leader. Abdullah Ibn Omar should attend your meetings as a counselor, but he has no part in the caliphate. Talhah is your partner in this affair (he was absent). If he comes during the three days, have him with you. If the three days pass before he comes, make your decision. . . I think that only one of the two men, Ali and Othman, will be the caliph. If Othman is selected, his weakness is his lenience. If Ali is selected, his blemish is his jolliness. And he is the most qualified to lead the people to the right road.

The Caliph commanded Abu Talhah (from the Medinities) to select fifty men from the Medinities and to stand in arms on the members of the Electoral Convention, insisting that they select a caliph from among them after the burial of the Caliph. He told them: "If five out of six agree and one disagrees, kill him. If four agree and two disagree, kill the two. If they are divided equally, have Abdullah Ibn Omar as an arbiter. If they do not accept his arbitration, you should side with the party of Abdul-Rahman Ibn Ouf and kill the rest if they did not agree with what people agree upon."<sup>3</sup> It is reported also that he said: "If three days pass before they decide on a leader, kill them all and let the Muslims choose for themselves."<sup>4</sup>

The members of the Convention met after the burial of the Caliph. They argued and disagreed. It is reported that Talhah withdrew from the race for Othman and Al-Zubeir withdrew for Ali and Saad Ibn Abu Waqass withdrew for his cousin Abdul-Rahman. Whether this was or was not true, it is well known that Abdul-Rahman suggested that he take himself out of the race, and that he be authorized to choose one of two men: Ali or Othman. Othman authorized him without hesitation. Ali did not authorize him until he made him take an oath to side with the truth, follow no personal desire, prefer no relative and endeavor for the interest of the nation. Abdul-Rahman was Othman's brother-in-law (he was married to Othman's sister Om Kulthoum).

Saad Ibn Abu Waqass advised his cousin Abdul-Rah-

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3. Ibn Al-Atheer, *Al-Kamil*, Part 3, p. 35.

4. Ibn Saad, *Al-Tabaqat*, Part 3, p. 342.

man to choose himself. But Abdul-Rahman said: "I dislike it because I saw in my dream last night a green prairie full of grass. A beautiful camel entered it and passed through it eating none of the grass. Another camel followed and did as the first camel did. A third and huge camel followed and did what the first two did. Then a fourth camel entered the prairie and went on gluttonly eating its grass. (He interpreted the four camels to represent the Prophet and the three Caliphs after him, and the prairie to represent the public funds.)

"By God, I shall not be the fourth camel," he said: "A man succeeding Abu Bakr and Omar will never be able to please people."

Abdul-Rahman consulted his friends, asking them whom he should choose. The majority of the Qureshites were in favor of Othman, and the outstanding companions from the non-Qureshites were in favor of Ali. He met with Ali and Othman separately. On the third day Abdul-Rahman was determined to bring the matter to a conclusion. People gathered at the Holy Mosque in the morning. They filled it to its capacity.

Abdul-Rahman stood up and said: "People, the visitors have to go to their own towns. Counsel me. Ammar Ibn Yasir stood up and said to him: 'If you want to avoid the Muslims division, select Ali.'" Al-Miqdad Ibn Al-Aswad, another outstanding companion, seconded Ammar, saying: "Ammar told the truth. If you select Ali we say: We listen and obey."

The two companions were contradicted by Abdullah Ibn Abu Sarh, who said to Abdul-Rahman: "If you want to avoid the Qureshites division, select Othman." Abdullah Ibn Abu Rabi-ah from the clan of Makhzoom seconded him saying: "You told the truth. Should Abdul-Rahman select Othman, we say: We heard and will obey." Ibn Abu Sarh smiled, but Ammar said to him: "When were you sincere to the Muslims?" (Ibn Abu Sarh embraced Islam during the time of the Prophet. Then he deserted the faith. The Messenger ordered the Muslims to kill him wherever they find him.)

The Hashimites spoke and so did the Omayyads. Ammar addressed the multitudes, saying: "O people, certainly God has honored us with His Prophet and strengthened us with His religion. Where do you divert the caliphate from the members of the House of your Prophet?" A man from Makhzoom contradicted him by saying: "Son of Sumayah, who are you to tell Quraish what to do for themselves?" Saad Ibn Abu Waqass said to his cousin Abdul-Rahman: "Finish it before people fall into dissension."

### *Abdul-Rahman Selected Othman*

Abdul-Rahman called upon Ali. He offered him the caliphate with a new condition: "Will you pledge to God and covenant Him, that you will follow the Book of God, the teachings of the Messenger and the precepts of the two caliphs (Abu Bakr and Omar) after him?" Ali replied: "I shall follow the Book of God, the teachings of the Prophet, and I shall follow my best knowledge and endeavor to the maximum of my ability."

As he did not accept the offered condition, Abdul-Rahman turned to Othman with the same offer, and Othman accepted. It is said that Abdul-Rahman offered it to the two men three times and in each time, Ali refused the condition and Othman accepted it.

At this point, Abdul Rahman lifted his head towards the ceiling of the Mosque saying: "God, be my witness, I have transferred the responsibility from my neck to the neck of Othman. Then he pledged his allegiance to Othman.

Ali commented on what took place saying: "This is not the first day you have collaborated against us (members of the House of the Prophet). . . By God, you gave him the leadership only to return it to you later. God is able to change the situation." Then he turned to both Abdul-Rahman and Othman saying: "May God plight you with a mutual and lasting hostility." Abdul-Rahman retorted, saying: "Ali, do not incur trouble upon yourself (reminding him that the Second Caliph ordered them to kill any dissenter)."

Ali left after he gave his pledge to Othman, saying:

**“What is written of timed events will reach its maturity.”**

**Ammar said to Abdul-Rahman: “By God, you have left out the man of truth and correct judgement!” Al-Miqdad Ibn Al-Aswad joined Ammar saying: “By God, I have never witnessed anything similar to what has been done to the members of the House of the Prophet after his death. I am amazed at Quraish who left out a man unequaled in knowledge, piety, and justice. If I have supporters, I will fight the Qureshites now as I fought them in the battles of Badr and Ohod.” Abdul-Rahman replied: “Miqdad, fear God. I am afraid that you will bring about divisions among Muslims.” Al-Miqdad retorted angrily, saying: “The one who creates division is the one who follows his own selfish interest.”<sup>5</sup>**

## **OBSERVATIONS**

As we have presented the events of the Electoral Convention briefly, it would be appropriate to make the following observations:

1. The Second Caliph stated that if Abu Obediah Ibn Al-Jarrah and Salim, servant of Abu Hutheifah, were living, he would have appointed one of them, for the Messenger said: “Abu Obediah is the trustworthy of this nation and Salim is a strong lover of God.” He refused to appoint Ali about whom he heard from the Messenger numerous statements. None of them were made about any other companion.

Assuming the Messenger said that Abu Obediah was the trustworthy of this nation, the Messenger also said: “Ali is from me and I am from Ali, and no one is qualified to represent me but Ali.”<sup>6</sup>

The Messenger did not commission Abu Obediah nor any one else from among the companions to deliver what he had of trusts to the Meccans at the time of his Hijrah. He

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5. Ibn Al-Atheer, in his *Al-Kamil*, Part 3, pp. 32-35, and Ibn Abu Al-Hadeed in his Commentaries on Nahjul-Balaghah, Vol. 1, pp. 63-65, taken from Al-Tabari's History.

6. Al-Termathi, Sunan Al-Termathi, Part 5, p. 300, hadith No. 3803.

entrusted only Ali to do this on his behalf. He entrusted him also to deliver the chapter of Bara-ah to the pilgrims, and ordered him to take that chapter from Abu Bakr after he commissioned him with its delivery. Gabriel told the Prophet: "No one should deliver on your behalf except yourself or a man from the members of your House."<sup>7</sup>

The Messenger, according to Omar, said: "Salim is a strong lover of God," but he did not say that God loves Salim. The passing Caliph should have remembered that the Messenger said: "God has commanded me to love four persons and informed me that He loves them." Then he said: "Ali is one of them," repeating that three times. If the Caliph did not hear this statement from the Messenger, certainly he heard from him, at Khaibar, a much more important statement. The Islamic army under the leadership of Abu Bakr, and then of Omar, was unable to conquer the fortress of Kheibar. At that serious moment, the Holy Prophet said: "I shall give the banner tomorrow to a man who loves God and His Messenger and is loved by God and His Messenger. God will open the fortresses at his hands."<sup>8</sup>

Omar used to say that he never wished the leadership except that day, so that the words of the Messenger would be about him. The Messenger on the following day gave the banner to Ali Ibn Abu Talib, after he cured his two inflamed eyes miraculously. And on that day the Almighty opened the fortresses at Ali's hands.

Yet neither these nor other significant statements about Ali could induce the passing Caliph to nominate Ali for the high office.

### *Is the Hadith Accurate?*

It is very difficult to believe that the Messenger said that Abu Obediah was the most trustworthy of the nation. Abu Obediah was not more trustworthy than Ali or Abu Bakr or Omar. The Messenger might have uttered the words jok-

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7. Al-Hakim, *Al-Mustadrak*, Part 3, p. 51.

8. Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Part 5, p. 171, and Muslim, in *Sahih Muslim*, Part 15, pp. 170-171.

ingly. He might have said that Abu Obediah is one of the trustworthies of this nation, and Omar misheard the statement, and this would not be unusual.

Omar and his son inaccurately and inadvertently attributed to the Prophet that he said: "The deceased is to be punished for the cry of his family." Muslim in his Sahih recorded that Ayeshah denied the attributed statement, saying: "Omar and his son are neither liars nor discredited. But the ear sometimes mishears. The Prophet only said that God increases the punishment of the unbeliever by his family's weeping." Then she cited the Qur'anic verse: "And no soul shall bear the burden of another soul." (Part 6, pp. 230-232)

### *Could a Non-Qureshite be a Caliph?*

2. The passing Caliph was constantly advocating that the caliphate is an exclusive right of the Qureshites. He repeatedly spoke of that during his reign and the reign of Abu Bakr. Yet he wished to have Salim, servant of Abu Huth-eifa, alive. For he would have named him his successor, while Salim was neither a Qureshite nor an Arab. He was a man from Ostokhar. He was enslaved and sold several times. Finally he came to the ownership of Abu Hutheifa, and because his father was not known, he was called Salim, servant of Abu Hutheifa.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, the passing Caliph was ready to appoint Salim who was neither a Qureshite nor an Arab. But he was not ready to appoint Ali who was the cousin of the Messenger and the Messenger made him his brother.

### *The Medinite Companions Out*

3. The passing Caliph chose six companions from Qur-  
aish for the membership of the Electoral Convention. He gave them alone the right of competing for the caliphate, and gave them alone the right of selecting the caliph. He commanded all Muslims to follow them and to abide by their decision. The nation, according to him, had no right

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6. Taha Hussein, *Al-Fitnat Al-Kubra*, Part 1, p. 37.



to disagree with them. He added to the six a seventh (Abdullah, his son) as a consultant and arbiter, and that consultant was also a Qureshite.

The Caliph did not admit any Medinite companion as a voter or as a consultant. The new caliph is not a caliph of the Qureshites only. He is the Caliph of all Muslims. The Medinites did not have the right to elect a caliph from among themselves, but they had a right, equal to that of the Qureshites, in choosing any Qureshite caliph.

Evidently, the passing Caliph excluded the Medinites for a reason: The Medinites were predominantly in favor of Ali. Had he included members from them, they could have given Ali the edge in the election, and Omar did not want that to happen. The method which he chose for the members of the convention to follow in selecting the caliph was obviously steering the affair in a direction adverse to Ali. The six members to whom he confined the right of seeking the leadership and selecting the leader had their own inclinations which were known to the Caliph. Othman was seeking the caliphate for himself, Abdul-Rahman was his brother-in-law, Saad Ibn Abu Waqass was Abdul-Rahman's cousin, and he would not oppose him. Talhah Ibn Obeidullah was from the clan of Abu Bakr who were unfriendly to Ali because of the rivalry between him and the First Caliph. Thus, the majority of the members of the Electoral Convention were unfavorable to Ali.

Ali immediately noted this when he heard the passing Caliph giving his instruction to the six members on the method of selecting the caliph. When he left Omar's house, Ali told the Hashimites: "If your people (the Qureshites) are obeyed, you will never reach the leadership." He told his uncle Al-Abbas: "Uncle, the leadership has already been diverted away from us. . . Omar equalized Othman with me and ordered the people to follow the majority of the six members. If the members are divided equally, he told the Muslims to side with Abdul-Rahman, and Abdul-Rahman is a brother-in-law of Othman. Saad is Abdul-

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9. Ibn Al-Atheer, *Al-Kamil*, Part 3, p. 33.

Rahman's cousin, and they will not disagree with each other. If the other two are with me, they will not avail me.”<sup>9</sup>

Had the Caliph added a few more members who were not self-serving, Ali could have won the election.

While dying, the passing Caliph repeatedly stated that Ali was the most qualified among the six to direct the nation to the right road. This testimony is in accordance with the statements of the Prophet in which he declared that Ali never parted with the Holy Qur'an and that he was in complete alliance with the truth.

As the Caliph expressed his well-founded confidence in Ali, he was expected to tip the scale in Ali's favor by advising the members of the convention to be on his side in case of division. Contrary to this expectation, the passing Caliph commanded the members of the convention to accept his son's arbitration if they were equally divided. Should they reject his arbitration, the Caliph commanded them to follow Abdul-Rahman Ibn Ouf (rather than Ali). Needless to say, the Caliph's action did not correspond with his professed convictions.

### *Abdullah Ibn Omar*

4. We find in the admission of Abdullah Ibn Omar to the Convention as a consultant and arbiter another discrepancy. This righteous companion was according to his father's testimony, incapable of making decisions about leaving, or living with his wife. A man with such inability should not be made consultant or arbiter in a highly important matter such as the caliphate on which the future of Islam depends.

Abdullah's weakness and hostility towards Ali became evident years after his father's death. The whole Muslim World, with the exception of Muaweyah and his followers in Syria, elected the Imam Ali after the death of Othman. But Abdullah refused to cast his vote for the Imam. The Imam's reign lasted about five years and Abdullah continued for the duration of his reign to withhold his hand from him, in spite of his awareness of what the Messenger said about

him. The same Abdullah was willing later to give his allegiance to Yazeed Ibn Muaweyah. Muslim in his Sahih reported the following:

“Abdullah Ibn Omar came to his cousin Abdullah Ibn Mutee when the Battle of Al-Harrah took place. (In this battle the sacred city of the Prophet was defiled by Yazeed’s army and its righteous people were massacred.) Spread the cushion for Abu Abdul-Rahman (Abdullah Ibn Omar), Abdullah Ibn Mutee said to his aides. But Ibn Omar said to him: “I did not come here to sit down. I came to report a hadith. I heard the Messenger of God saying: Whoever stands in open disobedience (of a caliph to whom he owes obedience) will meet God on the Day of Judgement lacking an excuse. And whoever dies owing *no* allegiance (to a caliph), dies in a pre-Islamic state.”<sup>10</sup>

By reporting this hadith, Ibn Omar was trying to prevent Ibn Mutee from revolting against Yazeed, urging him to give allegiance to the wicked caliph. This shows that Ibn Omar himself was thinking that he would meet a pre-Islamic death if he did not give allegiance to Yazeed. Yet Yazeed was the killer of the Imam Hussein and the defiler of sanctity of Medina, and demolisher of the Kaabah. But Abdullah was not afraid to meet a pre-Islamic death when he refused to give his allegiance to Ali, the one whom the Messenger “brothered.”

The way this companion understood the words of the Prophet is amazing. The Prophet in his reported statement prohibited rebellion against a righteous caliph to whom the rebellious had pledged loyalty. Such a rebellion, of course, is inexcusable by God. But Ibn Omar thought that the Prophet was commanding the Muslims to obey and give their allegiance to a wicked ruler. Disobedience of such a caliph is not only excusable by God but also desirable to Him. As a matter of fact Islam commands the Muslims to

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10. Muslim, Sahih Muslim, Part 12, p. 40.

overthrow their wicked rulers and forbids pledging loyalty to them. The Holy Qur'an declares: "You will not find people who believe in God and the Last Day befriending any one who defies God and His Messenger."<sup>11</sup>

The attitude of Abdullah towards these events leaves little doubt that his admission to the Electoral Convention represented an additional help to Othman and an additional problem to Ali.

### *Does Islam Forbid Opposition?*

5. The passing Caliph instructed the Muslims to execute any of the Electoral Convention's six members that disagreed with their majority. If the members were equally divided, the party of Abdul-Rahman was to be followed. The other three were also to be executed if they persisted in their opposition. And all six members were to be executed if they did not reach any decision within three days after his burial, and let the rest of the Muslims choose a caliph. This is astonishing, for Islam does not permit killing a believer because he disagrees with the majority or with Abdul-Rahman or with the Caliph. Islam sanctifies the life of all believers. And a killer of a believer is doomed eternally. The Holy Qur'an declares:

"And whoever kills a believer deliberately, his punishment would be his eternal settlement in Hell: and the wrath of God is upon him and he is damned by God, and for him God has prepared a dreadful punishment."<sup>12</sup>

If killing any believer constitutes a major crime, killing one of the six is a much bigger crime, because the Prophet (according to Omar's report) considered them from the people of Paradise.

By his instructions, the passing Caliph implicitly recommended the execution of Ali if he opposed the majority of the six or Abdul-Rahman. Yet the Messenger said: "God, love whoever loves Ali and be hostile to whoever is hostile

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11. Chapter 58, verse 32.

12. Chapter 4, verse 93.

to him." Thus, hostility towards Ali, let alone executing him, provokes the wrath of God.

It is difficult to understand how Omar recommended the execution of outstanding companions or a member of the House of the Prophet for merely disagreeing with him or with Abdul-Rahman. The Muslims used to disagree with the Messenger and he did not punish them. Omar himself opposed the Prophet and prevented him from writing his will and the Messenger did not execute him nor did he penalize him. Was Omar's or Abdul-Rahman's desire more sacred than that of the Messenger?

The Caliph probably thought that the endorsement of his appointment received from the Muslims at the beginning of his rule had given him an absolute authority to do whatever he thought to be in the interest of the Muslims. Upon this, he issued his stern measures concerning the six members. But this is obviously erroneous.

The Caliph whose appointment by another Caliph was endorsed by Muslims may have the right to choose his successor or to limit the freedom of his electors or to deprive them of some of their rights. But that endorsement certainly does not give him the right to kill an outstanding companion, who was declared by the Messenger to be from the people of Paradise, for merely disagreeing with his opinion. Muslims do not have the right to authorize him to do what is forbidden to him and to them. They neither collectively nor individually have the right to kill a person whose life is sanctified by God. Election of a caliph is never absolute. It is rather conditioned by adherence to the Book of God and the teaching of the Prophet, and both prohibit killing a believer.

### *Unheeded Warning*

6. Two dreams took place during the time of the Electoral Convention:

1. The dream of the passing Caliph who saw in his swoon a man entered a garden and picked all fresh and ripe fruit, taking them to himself and putting them under him.

2. The dream of Abdul-Rahman, in which he saw a

beautiful camel entered a green prairie full of grass. The camel passed through it, sparing the grass. A second and a third followed and behaved as the first camel did. Then a fourth entered the prairie and went on gluttonly eating its grass.

Both dreamers understood from their visions that the coming caliph would not be scrupulous about the public wealth. The two men should have been induced by their alarming dreams to choose for the caliphate a man with high integrity who would not allow himself to take what does not belong to him. But the two dreamers did not heed the warning. They took measures by which they excluded the most scrupulous among the companions and selected a man with a loose policy toward public wealth.

History recorded two statements by Omar concerning Ali and Othman. To Ali he said: "What a great man you are! Should you be given the leadership, you will drive the nation to the straight path." To Othman, he said: "I expect the Qureshites to give the caliphate to you because they love you. Then you will carry the members of your house on the necks of the Arabs, giving them the public funds. Then a band of Arab wolves from various places will gather to slay you."<sup>13</sup>

Giving credence to this prophecy, we wonder how the passing Caliph favored Othman over Ali. Since he believed or suspected that Othman would adopt a loose policy towards the public funds, he should have excluded him from the Convention. Unfortunately, the passing Caliph did not only include him, but tipped the scale in his favor through his instructions to the members of the Convention. Thus, the Caliph did everything in his power to promote the cause of the one whom he suspected and to defeat the one whom he trusted. Ali's trustworthiness concerning the public funds was evident to Omar and the rest of the companions. He was free of greed, and material wealth never attracted him. Unlike other companions such as Talhah, Al-Zubeir, Abdul-

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13. Ibn Abu Al-Hadeed, in his Commentaries on Nahjul-Balaghah, Vol. 1, p. 62.

Rahman, Othman, and other companions who accumulated millions of dirhams, Ali lived modestly. Throughout the days of the Prophet and the first two Caliphs, Ali was noted for leading a devotional and intellectual life.

The warning which Omar and Abdul-Rahman received through their alarming dreams should have prompted them to select Ali, rather than Othman, for the leadership. Unfortunately, they did the opposite.

### THE UNWARRANTED STIPULATION

7. The stipulation of Abdul-Rahman which required the would-be Third Caliph to follow the precepts of the first two Caliphs was an unjustifiable addition. The duty of every caliph is to follow the Book of God and the teachings of the Prophet. He is not duty-bound to follow the footsteps of any predecessor unless selected by the Prophet. When the new caliph is more knowledgeable than his predecessor and finds some of his deeds or rules erroneous, he would be duty-bound to disagree with him.

To put the precepts of the first two Caliphs on the same level with the Book of God and the teachings of His Prophet is a grave error. The Book of God is entirely true and the Messenger of God is immune from error in his religious instructions. On the other hand, the first two Caliphs were, like the rest of the good companions, subject to error. To put their words and deeds on the same level with the Holy Qur'an and the teaching of the Prophet is indeed a heresy in religion.

The caliphate can be based on an appointment by the Messenger of God in reliance on a Divine revelation. It also can be based on an election by a majority or a distinguished minority or on a selection by an elected or appointed predecessor.

The words and the deeds of an elected (or appointed by an elected) caliph do not become sacred Islamic law. Before his election, he would be like the rest of the good Muslims, unimmune from error. He will remain so after he is elected. His election does not change his personality; nor does it

make him profoundly knowledgeable if he had only a limited knowledge.

At best, he can be a *mujtahid* (a scholar capable of forming an independent opinion about the Islamic law). No other Islamic scholar is required to follow him, and it is permissible for laymen to follow a scholar other than him.

If the Messenger (in reliance on God's revelation) were to appoint a caliph, all Muslims would be required to follow his appointee. Their disagreement with the Messenger's appointee would be a disagreement with the Messenger himself. The first two Caliphs were not appointed by God's Messenger. The first was elected by the majority of the companions of the Prophet, and the second was appointed by the first. Neither of them can be considered more than a *mujtahid*, unimmune from error. A caliph that comes after them is not required to follow their footsteps.

This shows the baselessness and absurdity of Abdul-Rahman's condition which he imposed on the would-be Third Caliph. The absurdity reached its maximum when Abdul-Rahman tried to exact from Ali adherence to the path of the two Caliphs who used to resort to Ali as an authority in the Islamic law.

Furthermore, it was impossible for any ruler to follow the precepts of the first two Caliphs. The Second Caliph disagreed with the first on many things, among which was the method of distribution of the Islamic public funds. Abu Bakr followed the method of the Prophet, and distributed the funds among the Muslims equally. Omar classified the companions into categories and preferred some of the categories over the others.

As the two Caliphs disagreed with each other, it became impossible for any other caliph to agree with both of them even if he wanted to.

For this, we think that the stipulation of Abdul-Rahman was not only an addition in religion and innovation in Islam, but also a requirement the fulfillment of which is impossible.

Abdul-Rahman was in fact more kingly than the king. The First Caliph appointed the Second and did not require him to follow his way. He expected him only to



follow the Book of God and the teachings of the Prophet. Nor did the Second Caliph instruct Abdul-Rahman to exact from the next caliph to follow his footsteps.

I do not think that Abdul-Rahman was unaware of the unjustifiability of his introduced condition. He was a prominent companion and he was not that naive. Otherwise, the passing Caliph would not have given him such an important authority. The fact is that he added his unwarranted condition only to get rid of Ali. It was difficult for him to prefer Othman over Ali without an excuse. Neither Othman nor any other companion had what Ali had of distinctions in knowledge, endeavor in Islam, and kinship to the Prophet and of being the first male Muslim. In spite of all these distinctions Abdul-Rahman was determined to give the leadership to Othman rather than Ali, in spite of his unequaled record. Othman is his brother-in-law and giving him the leadership is a profiting deal. Othman is expected to return to him the favor by appointing him as a successor. Ali, on the other hand, is not a man of deals. His leadership will slam the door in the face of all ambitious Qureshites. His children are expected to succeed him. They are the grandchildren of the Prophet and they are, by the testimony of the Prophet, the leaders of the youth of paradise.

But how can Abdul-Rahman favor Othman over Ali without risking his whole reputation as a fair and righteous companion? He needed an excuse, and he invented his condition as an excuse. He offered the leadership to Ali, then to Othman, stipulating their adherence to the path of the first two Caliphs, knowing that Ali will reject such an unjustifiable condition. But the veil was too thin. Ali immediately accused him, saying: "By God, you gave him the caliphate only because you expect him to return it to you later. . . ."

#### *A Justification by Hadith*

It may be said that Abdul-Rahman's condition is justifiable by two statements attributed to the Prophet. The first

is the following hadith: "Follow the example of the two men after me, Abu Bakr and Omar . . ."

But the content of the hadith testifies to its unauthenticity for the following:

The hadith indicates that the Messenger had appointed Abu Bakr and Omar to be his successors, while it is a well known fact in history that neither was appointed by the Messenger.

When Abu Bakr was arguing against the Medinites at the Saqifat, he said to the Medinites: "The Arabs do not acknowledge any leadership unless it is from the Qureshites, and the Messenger said: "The Imams are from the Quraish." Had the reported hadith been authentic, he should have used it as a decisive evidence.

Abu Bakr called upon the Muslims at the Saqifat to elect either Abu Obeidah or Omar. Had the Messenger called upon the Muslims to follow the example of the two men after him, Abu Bakr and Omar, it would prohibit Abu Bakr to call for the election of Abu Obeidah because only he and Omar were selected by the Prophet. . . .

Abdul-Rahman was blamed and accused by Ali, Ammar and Al-Miqdad with an ulterior motive in his introduced condition. Had this reported hadith been authentic, he should have vindicated himself by citing it.

Again, had the hadith been authentic, Ali would have accepted Abdul-Rahman's condition. The Prophet, according to the hadith, had called upon the Muslims to follow the two Caliphs. And Ali was the most obedient to God and His Messenger. Ali's rejection of the introduced condition testifies to his unawareness of this hadith. Yet, he was the most knowledgeable in the teachings of the Messenger.

Furthermore, the failure of all companions to report this hadith at the time of the Convention, indicates that none of the companions knew about it. This, by itself, makes it incredible.

It is a well known fact in history that Ali claimed that the caliphate was his exclusive right and that he refused to pledge his loyalty to Abu Bakr and continued his re-

fusal until his wife Fatimah died. Had the reported statement been authentic, Ali would have neither claimed such a right nor refused to give his allegiance to Abu Bakr.

*The Second Hadith* which may be cited for justifying Abdul-Rahman's condition is the following:

"Certainly God has put the truth on Omar's tongue and in his heart. . . ." If this were true, it would be mandatory for any caliph after him to follow his lead.

Probably the Holy Prophet made this reported statement on one of the occasions where Omar had given a sound opinion, and the Prophet was attesting to the soundness of Omar's opinion on that occasion. Thus, the attributed statement should not be taken as a general declaration, for the following reasons:

If we take the hadith as a sweeping statement, we have to believe that Omar was completely immune of error in words and in deeds, whether it is on worldly or religious affairs. But the majority of the Muslims do not believe that the Messenger himself was immune of error. They believe in his immunity from error only in religious instructions.

Another reason for rejecting this hadith is that Omar was erroneous on several occasions:

He was not with the truth when he denied the death of the Messenger. Ibn Husham in his Biography of the Prophet, and many other historians reported that Omar said on that day: "Certainly there are hypocrites, alleging that the Messenger of God has died. By God, he shall return as Moses returned and he will sever the hands and the feet of men alleging that the Messenger of God died."

Al-Bukhari in his Sahih recorded that Abu Bakr came on that day while Omar was speaking to the people. He commanded Omar to sit down, but Omar refused to sit. The people left Omar and turned their faces to Abu Bakr and Abu Bakr told them: "Whoever among you was worshipping Mohammad should know that Mohammad has died. And whoever was worshipping God should know that He is living and never dies. The Almighty said: "And Mohammad is but a Messenger; the Messengers before him passed away." Omar later said: "By God, when I heard

Abu Bakr reciting this verse, my feet could not carry me. I fell down to earth when I heard him reciting that Mohammad had died.”<sup>14</sup>

The truth was not with Omar when he opposed the Prophet while trying to write his will. He provoked the anger of the Prophet, and by his opposition the nation was deprived of the document which was expected to illuminate the road to the nation after him.<sup>15</sup>

Certainly Omar was seriously erroneous on this occasion. He prevented the Prophet from writing his will, and that is a major sin. He questioned the mental capability of the Prophet, while the Holy Qur’an declared: “And he (the Prophet) does not speak out of a selfish desire. It is only a revelation sent down to Him).”<sup>16</sup>

Again the Qur’an declares: “O you who believe, obey God and obey the Messenger . . .”<sup>17</sup>

Omar was not with the truth on the day of Al-Hudeibyah. Historians unanimously reported that Omar argued with the Messenger and objected to the projected truce between the Messenger and the pagans of Quraish. Omar said after that, “I still pay charity, fast, pray, and free slaves as an atonement for what I had done on that day.”

The Second Caliph was not right in setting up his Electoral Convention. His refusal to appoint the Imam Ali and his instruction to the members of the Convention in selecting the would-be Third Caliph brought Othman to power and put the caliphate in the hands of his Omayyad relatives who transformed the caliphate into a despotic and hereditary rule.

These are only a few out of many occasions on which the Second Caliph took erroneous stands. The right word was not always on his tongue, nor was the truth always in

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14. Ibn Husham, *Biography of the Prophet*, Part 2, p. 656; and *Sahih Al-Bukhari*. Part 6. p. 17.

15. Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Part 1, p. 39.

16. The Holy Qur’an, Chapter 53, verses 3-4.

17. Chapter 59, verse 7.

his heart. Thus, the two hadiths cannot justify Abdul-Rahman's invented condition.

### ALI'S UNIQUE DEDICATION

8. The manner in which Ali conducted himself during the crisis of the Convention was unparalleled in the history of Islam after the Prophet. It was the high example of nobility, firmness, and adherence to the truth. The leadership of the Muslim World was offered to him, and its price was only a promise on his part. He refused to pay the price and turned the offer down because it demanded from him to deviate slightly from his principles. No temptation of any magnitude could influence the man of the truth. The caliphate to him was not an end by itself; it was only a means of establishing justice and realizing the ideals to which he was dedicated and for which he staked his life since his ears heard the call of Mohammad.

He was irritated by the formation of the Convention and viewed it as an ominous event fraught with dangers. The structure of the Convention was destined to bring Othman to power. This would put his ambitious and unscrupulous relatives in a challenging position, and make them seek the high office at any cost.

Foreseeing these dangers, the Imam decided to try to prevent them by seeking the caliphate.

#### *True Prophecies*

History recorded that Ali made two prophetic statements during the crisis of the Convention, forecasting the expected events, as if he were reading from a book:

Al-Tabari recorded that Ali spoke to his uncle Abbas after the Second Caliph gave his instructions about the method by which the Third Caliph would be selected. "I know that they will select Othman," he said, "and he will bring about innovations and unaccepted changes. And if I live, I shall remind you. Should Othman die or be killed, the Omayyads will make the caliphate rotate among them.

And if I shall be living, they will find me where they dislike.”

He spoke also to the members of the Convention when they were trying to select the new caliph:

“Praise be to God who from us has chosen the Prophet Mohammad and sent him to us as a Messenger. We are the members of the House of the Prophet, the source of wisdom, the security of the people of the earth, and the haven to the seekers of security (against deviation).

“We have a right. If we are given it, we will take it; if we are deprived of it, we will take the back seat even if the journey will be long. Had the Messenger given us a directive, we would have fulfilled his directive. Had he told us to take an action, we would have fought for it until we died. No one will be faster than I in response to a righteous invitation or kindness to a kin.

“Listen to my word and comprehend my presentation. Your leadership after this Convention (if you fail to select the qualified leader) will be violently contended. Covenants will be breached and swords will be drawn until your unity will come to an end. Some of you will be imams of revisions, some will be followers of men of ignorance.”<sup>18</sup>

Both prophecies were realized. Othman was elected. He brought unacceptable changes, and this brought about his death. By his violent death, the Islamic unity came to an end. The Imam was elected after him, but prominent companions breached their covenants with him after they pledged to him their loyalty. The leadership was violently contended. Swords were drawn and many battles were fought. Leaders of revisions, deviation, and ignorance emerged, and masses of the people followed them.

Expecting these ugly events, the Imam was compelled to enter into the Electoral Convention, trying his best to prevent the expected events from taking place. This is what made him disregard the opinion of his uncle Abbas who advised him to stay out of the Convention.

Membership to the Convention was below his dignity,

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18. Ibn Al-Atheer, *Al-Kamil*, Part 3, p. 37.

but he was duty-bound to enter the race. Had he shied away from the Convention, he would have given the other members an excuse for by-passing him, or they could have taken his refusal of the membership as an evidence of his disinterest in leadership.

A refusal on his part to enter into the Electoral Convention would have put the Imam in an indefensible position in the eyes of history. It may lead us to think that he deprived himself of the leadership when it was available to him. We may think that he did not do his best to avoid the ugly events which he was expecting.

Furthermore, his absence from the Convention could have been considered an irresponsible stand and an encouragement to the members to elect someone else. Thus, he would share with them the responsibility of their error.

It was his duty to attend the Convention and remind its members of his right to the leadership and that the members of the House of the Prophet are the source of wisdom, a security of the people of the earth against straying, and a haven to whoever seeks such a security. And this is what the Prophet meant when he commanded the nation to follow the Book of God and the members of his House, and likened them to the Ark of Noah.

The Imam fulfilled his obligation by attending the Convention. He warned the members of the grave consequences of their wrong choice. He reminded them of the right of the House of the Prophet in leadership, a right for which the Prophet did not ask his relatives to fight.

History records that a dialogue between Ali and the rest of the members of the Convention took place and went as follows:

The Imam: I ask you in the name of God: Is there among you anyone other than I whom the Prophet called his brother?

The Members: None other than you.

The Imam: Is there any among you other than myself about whom the Messenger said: whoever I am his "Moula," this Ali is his "Moula"?

**The Members: None.**

**The Imam: "Is there anyone among you besides me to whom the Messenger said: You are to me like Aaron to Moses, but there shall be no Prophet after me?"**

**The Members: None.**

**The Imam: Is there anyone among you besides me, who was trusted with the chapter of Bara-ah, and the Messenger said about him: no one will deliver for me except myself or a man from me?"**

**The Members: None.**

**The Imam: "Do you not know that the companions of the Messenger deserted him at more than one battle and I never deserted him?"**

**They said: Yes.<sup>19</sup>**

**The Imam told them all that, and they were aware of the truth of what he said. But their personal interests were in conflict with what they knew about him.**

## **MOTIVES AND CONSEQUENCES**

9. The Imam endeavored through his logic to prevent the members of the Convention from taking an irresponsible direction, leading the Muslims to an insane turmoil which would govern the future of the nation for generations to come. Unfortunately, the members were unable to rise to the level which the serious situations were demanding. They were mostly ambitious and unwilling to forget their interest. If Ali came to power, their personal hope in reaching the leadership in the future would fade out. If leadership returned to the House of the Messenger it would stay in it for a long time. On the other hand, giving the leadership to Othman would keep the door open for people such as Abdul-Rahman who was expecting the aging Othman to die before him and to name him as a successor.

The members of the Convention were psychologically ready to bar Ali from the caliphate, in spite of what the Prophet said about him. Why not? The first two Caliphs,

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19. Ibn Abu Al-Hadeed, Commentaries on Nahjul-Balaghah, Vol. 2, pp. 198-199.



with all their righteousness, did that. The rest of the companions were expected to follow them.

As diverting the leadership from Ali at the time of the Prophet's death was unexpected, diverting it to him after the two Caliphs had become also unexpected.

The Second Caliph did not view it out of line to give the caliphate to Othman. Probably, he considered it a good deed by which he returned a favor to him.

The readers may remember that Othman wrote Abu Bakr's will in which he named Omar his successor. While dictating his will, Abu Bakr fainted before pronouncing Omar's name. Fearing the death of the Caliph in his swoon, Othman took it upon himself to write Omar's name. When Abu Bakr woke up, he asked Othman to read what he wrote. Othman did that, and when he read Omar's name, Abu Bakr happily marvelled. Omar, of course, never forgot what Othman did for him.

### *A New Class*

10. As the events which preceded the Electoral Convention brought about creation of the new classes: The Qureshites, the preferred companions, and the Omayyads, the formation of the Convention added a new class. Talhah, Al-Zubeir, Saad and Abdul-Rahman became members of a higher class among the companions. Omar promoted them and testified for their qualifications to the caliphate by admitting them into the Electoral Convention. This inflamed their ambition for leadership.

It made them feel that they are Ali's equals and competitors. This by itself brought about many dangerous consequences. It made Talhah and Al-Zubeir try to hasten Othman's death after they pledged their loyalty to him. They conspired against him and each one of them was an aspirant to succeed him. This led to Othman's violent death and ended the Islamic unity. The same ambition motivated these two good companions to challenge Ali's leadership later, breaching their covenant with him in which they pledged their loyalty and obedience to him.

## *The Lost Opportunity*

11. Through the formation of the Electoral Convention, the Muslims and the Second Caliph lost the last opportunity for correcting the situation and avoiding incalculable tragedies for the nation.

The passing Caliph wrote for himself and his nation brilliant and glorious pages in history. The caliphate during his and his predecessor's reigns took a righteous path, inspired by the guidance of the Holy Qur'an and the precepts of the Holy Prophet. But the goal of the Heavenly message was not the continuity of the righteous government for only twelve years to be derailed afterwards from the path of justice, brotherhood, and true democracy.

The leadership was diverted from Ali to Abu Bakr, then to Omar, and both were righteous doers. Had Ali taken over the leadership after Omar, his coming to power would not have been too late. The nation was still healthy, ruled by the spirit of brotherhood and placing its religion above its worldly affairs. It was possible for the Imam with his tremendous qualifications, to continue the nation on the right road and to add brighter pages to its brilliant record. It was possible for him to prevent the disunity from taking place.

The Omayyad influence started to grow during the days of Omar, but that influence was not yet developed enough to represent a serious danger to the caliphate. Muaweyah's provincial regime was not strong enough to challenge the central authority. Had Ali succeeded Omar, he would have been in a position to uproot the Omayyad plant from Damascus before its roots were deepened and spread in the Syrian soil.

The preferred companions were not capable of challenging the Imam's leadership. Nor were Talhah and Al-Zubeir powerful enough to become a threat to him. They were only two out of scores of good companions.

Had Omar given the leadership to Ali, he would have avoided the nation all those catastrophic events, securing the continuity of the unity of the nation along with the

continuity of the righteous caliphate for many generations to come.

Had Omar done that, *he would have returned to the members of the House of the Prophet their right in the Islamic leadership, and protected these most righteous people from the atrocities of the Omayyads. By doing that, he would have brought pleasure to the Holy soul of the Prophet.*

With his great wisdom, Omar was expected to take this righteous course. Unfortunately, the Qureshite clannish attachment of this prominent companion outweighed his wisdom. This produced the tragedy of the Electoral Convention.

## Othman's Reign

The Electoral Convention produced its expected conclusion. Othman became the Third Caliph. As a companion, Othman was not less than his two predecessors: Abu Bakr and Omar. He was a member of the fourth ten of the early Muslims (among the first 40 Muslims). His Islam was earlier than that of Omar, and before his conversion he was not as violent as Omar in opposing Islam. He had a distinction which neither of his two predecessors had: being the son-in-law of the Messenger, twice. He married Ruqayah, one of the daughters of the Prophet. The fruit of this marriage was a son named Abdullah who died at the age of six after the death of his mother. After Ruqayah, Othman married her sister, Om Kulthoom. She also did not live long with him. She died during the life of her Holy father.

### *Non-Combatant*

Othman did not attend the Battle of Badr. He was in Medinah, helping his sick wife Ruqayah who died before the return of her Holy father from the battlefield. Othman attended the Battle of Ohod and other battles. History does not record any physical participation on his part in a fight at any battle. Like the majority of the companions, he deserted the Prophet during the Battle of Ohod. He returned to the Prophet after the battle ended, and he was one of the companions who were forgiven by the Almighty according to the Holy Qur'an. "Those who turned their back on the day the two hosts met, it was Satan who caused them to fall, because of some evil they have done. But God has

blotted out their sin. For God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Forbearing.”<sup>1</sup>

Othman was not a warrior, but he was charitable. He participated effectively in funding the army of Tabuk. It is reported that he brought to the Messenger a thousand dinars (equivalent to ten thousand dollars), to be spent in financing the military mission. He did other charities.

Othman came to power at the end of the twenty-third year after the Hijrah (644 A.D.). His reign started after he passed seventy and continued for twelve years.

During the first six years of his reign, the affairs of his administration went well. The Muslims achieved many victories during this period. They were still in a state of war with the two prominent Empires of that time: The Persian and Byzantine Empires. What was left of the Persian Empire during the reign of Omar came into the Islamic Dominion. North Africa was also detached from the Roman Empire to become a part of the Muslim State. The Third Caliph lifted the ban against military use of the seaways. An important Islamic fleet was built in the Mediterranean.

The last six years of the reign of the Third Caliph were full of ugly events. The class struggle between the over-paid and the under-paid started to grow rapidly until it exploded with a revolution whose first victim was the Third Caliph. The events which took place during the last six years were germinated before this period. The seeds of these events were born at the beginning of his reign or during the reigns of his predecessors.

### *A Bridging Personality*

Othman possessed neither the wisdom nor the determination of his predecessors. Nor did he have their non-materialistic attitude. In fact, his personality had two sides opposed to each other. On the one hand, he was an early Muslim. He accompanied the Messenger for a long time, acquired the honor of marrying two daughters of the Messenger, and was charitable for the cause of Islam. On the

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1. Chapter 3, verse 155.

other hand, he was a member of the Omayyad clan. His love to them was unbounded in spite of their dark past towards the faith of Islam and its Prophet. These two sides of his personality made the outstanding companions foresee the Third Caliph's potential as a bridge over which the caliphate might pass from the righteous reign of the early companions of Mohammad to the despotic and unjust reign of the members of the clan of Omayyad.

The reader may remember that when Omar issued his instructions concerning the selection of his successor, Ali said to his uncle, Al-Abbas: "I know that they will select Othman and if he is killed or dies, the members of the Omayyad clan will make the caliphate rotate among themselves and if I am alive, they will find me where they dislike."

It is amazing that Quraish refused to give the leadership to the Imam Ali, fearing that the leadership might rest in the House of the Prophet, because of their unequalled religious honor, yet Quraish chose to make the caliphate rest in the House of Omayyad which was noted for its hostility towards the Messenger and his religion.

### EARLY OPPOSITION

This was probably one of the reasons which made two outstanding companions, Ammar Ibn Yasir and Al-Maqdad Ibn Al-Aswad, start their opposition to Othman at the very beginning of his reign. They loudly objected to his coming to power in spite of what they knew of his righteousness.

History recorded that Ammar came out shouting after Othman's election: "Announcer of death, come forward and announce the death of Islam. Justice has died, and evil emerged. By God, if I find supporters I will fight the Qureshites. By God, if I find one person ready to fight them, I will be his second."<sup>2</sup>

He came to the Imam Ali and called upon him to start war against the Qureshites. But the Imam reminded him

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2. Ibn Abu Al-Hadeed, his Commentaries on Nahjul-Balagah, Vol. 2, pp. 411-412.

of the lack of support. He said to him and others: "I do not like to endanger you, or burden you with what is beyond your ability." Al-Miqdad came out on the day following Othman's election. While he was walking, he met Abdul-Rahman Ibn Ouf, the king-maker who was responsible for Othman's selection. A confrontation between the two companions took place and went as follows:

Al-Miqdad: "Abdul-Rahman, may God reward you in this world and the Hereafter if you have sought to please God by what you did. May He increase your wealth, if you have sought by what you did a worldly gain."

Abdul-Rahman: "May God have mercy upon you; listen to me."

Al-Miqdad: "By God, I will not listen." He pulled his hand from Abdul-Rahman's hand and left.

The two companions had another confrontation at another occasion:

Al-Miqdad: By God, I have never seen anything similar to what was done to the members of this House (of the Prophet).

Abdul-Rahman: Miqdad, why are you concerned with this?

Al-Miqdad: By God, I love them for the love of the Messenger of God. I am amazed by the Qureshites who claim superiority over other people because of their relationship to the Prophet, then allow themselves to take the authority of the Prophet away from the members of his House.

Abdul-Rahman: By God, I have tried to do what is best for the interest of the people.

Al-Miqdad: By God, you have left a man who is capable of leading the nation to the right road and maintaining truth and executing justice. By God, if I have supporters against the Qureshites, I will fight them as I fought them at Badr and Ohod."

Abdul-Rahman: May your mother be bereaved by your death. Let no one hear those words from you. I am afraid that you may have become revisionist and devious.

Al-Miqdad: A person that invites people to follow the

truth and right leadership is not revisionist. But the one who drives people to the falsehood and prefers his own interest above the truth is the man of revision and division . . .”<sup>3</sup>

Neither Ammar nor Al-Maqdad had any political ambitions, and neither of them was seeking through his endeavor any material gain. These companions were highly commended by the Messenger.

Ibn Majah reported, in his Sunan, that the Messenger said: “God has commanded me to love four persons and informed me that He loves them.” When he was asked who they were, he said, “Ali is of them (repeating that three times), Abu Tharr, Salman and Al-Miqdad.”<sup>4</sup>

Al-Termathi reported in his Sunan, that the Messenger said: “Every Prophet was given distinguished companions, but I was given fourteen.” Then he counted Ammar and Al-Miqdad among the fourteen.<sup>5</sup>

Al-Termathi also reported that the Prophet said when Ammar Ibn Yasir asked permission to enter the house of the Prophet: “Admit him. Welcome the good, the purified.”<sup>6</sup>

He also recorded that Ayshah reported that the Messenger said: “Whenever Ammar is given the choice between two alternatives, he chooses the more righteous of the two.”<sup>7</sup>

Al-Termathi reported also that the Messenger said to Ammar: “Ammar, be cheerful, the aggressor party will kill you.”<sup>8</sup>

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OMA'AD'S PLAN

What these good companions had seen through their intuition was becoming true. The signs of the future started to emerge quickly.

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3. Ibn Abu Al-Hadeed, in his Commentary on Nahjul-Balagha, Vol. 2, pp. 411-412.

4. Ibn Majah, his Sunan, Part 1, p. 53 (hadith No. 149).

5. Al-Termathi, his Sunan, Part 5, p. 329 (hadith No. 149).

6. Al-Termathi, his Sunan, Part 5, p. 332.

7. Al-Termathi, his Sunan, Part 5, pp. 332-333.

8. Al-Termathi, his Sunan, Part 5, pp. 332-333.



The members of the Omayyad clan met at the house of Othman after he was elected. Abu Sufyan, their old man, who had lost his sight through aging, asked them: "Are there any outsiders among you?" When they assured him that there were none, he said: "Children of Omayyad, rotate it (the caliphate) among you as boys rotate a football. By the one in whose name Abu Sufyan swears, there shall be neither a punishment nor requirement of account. Nor will there be a paradise or a hell or resurrection or a Day of Judgement."<sup>9</sup>

The Caliph, of course, chided him, but this did not change the attitude of Abu Sufyan. He asked a man to lead him to the grave of Al-Hamzah, uncle of the Prophet Mohammad and the prince of the martyrs. When he stood on the grave, he said, addressing Al-Hamzah: "Abu Imarah (a code name of Al-Hamzah), the matter for which we gladiated with each other has become a play in the hands of our youth." Then he kicked the grave with his foot.<sup>10</sup>

He meant that the Omayyads and the Prophet Mohammad and his family fought each other for authority. Now the authority had come into the hands of Omayyads and the members of the House of the Prophet were deprived of it.

It did not take long before these words were translated into a reality. The members of the Omayyad clan exploited the simplicity of the Third Caliph and his extreme love for them. Within the first few years of his reign, they put their hands on the two sources of power: The authority of the important provinces of the Islamic state and their treasuries.

The main power and wealth of the Islamic state were in three provinces: Syria, Iraq, and Egypt. During the first few years of the reign of Othman, these vast areas became Omayyad princedoms.

### *Muaweyah and Syria*

We have mentioned (Chapter 19) that Omar appointed

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9. Ibn Abu Al-Hadeed, in his Commentaries of Nahjul-Balaghah, Vol. 2, p. 411.

10. Obd Al-Fattah, Abd Al-Masqood, Al-Imam Ali, Part 1, p. 287.

Muaweyah governor of Damascus, then he added Jordan to his authority after the death of Yazeed (Muaweyah's brother). Omar also appointed Omair Ibn Saad (a Medinite) the governor of Homs and Quinnisrine and Abdul-Rahman Ibn Alqamah the governor of Palestine. When Omar died, these two men were still in their posts. But Abdul-Rahman Ibn Alqamah died at the beginning of the reign of Othman, and Omair resigned because of ailment. Othman added Palestine, Homs and Qinnisrine to the authority of Muaweyah.<sup>11</sup> Thus, within two years from the beginning of the reign of Othman, Muaweyah became the governor of what is called today the Greater Syria.

Muaweyah's influence started to grow during the days of Omar. Yet it remained relatively limited in size and heavily supervised by Omar. The size of his area was more than doubled during the reign of Othman and his influence became almost absolute and free of any supervision. Within a few years, Syria became an autonomous state within the Islamic state, and Muaweyah became the strong man of the Muslim world. Within a few years he was able to put in the battlefield a huge army containing one hundred thousand soldiers. It is worthy to note that Muaweyah was no more righteous than his father Abu Sufyan.

### *Ibn Abu Sarh In Egypt*

Omar died while Amr Ibn Al-Auss was the governor of Egypt. Othman dismissed him during the first two years of his reign. He replaced him with his foster brother Abdullah Ibn Saad Ibn Abu Sarh, who remained in his position until the end of Othman's reign. Ibn Abu Sarh was one of the enemies of the Holy Prophet. He professed Islam during the time of the Messenger, then deserted the faith. He used to ridicule the Holy Qur'an, saying: "I shall reveal equal to what God has revealed to Mohammad."

Ibn Husham reported that Ibn Abu Sarh embraced Islam and became a recorder of the revelation for the Prophet. Then he deserted the faith and went back to Qur-

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11. Ibn Al-Atheer in Al-Kamil, Part 3, p. 57.

aish. When the Messenger entered Mecca, he ordered his execution. Ibn Abu Sarh took refuge at Othman's house who was his foster brother, and Othman hid him. When the situation calmed down, Othman brought him to the Messenger, asking clemency for Abdullah. The Messenger kept silent for a good while then said: yes. When Othman and his foster brother left, the Messenger said to the companions around him: "I kept silent for a while, hoping that one of you would kill him." A Medinite companion asked: "Prophet of God, why did you not give me a signal?" The Messenger replied: "A Prophet does not kill by signal."<sup>12</sup>

### *Iraq*

There were two important cities in Iraq: Kufah and Bassrah. Omar appointed Saad Ibn Abu Waqass to be governor of Kufah. Then he dismissed him and replaced him by Al-Mugheerah Ibn Shubah.

When Othman came to power he dismissed Al-Mugheerah and replaced him by Saad Ibn Abu Waqass in response to a recommendation by Omar before his death.

Saad was a highly respected companion and gained a prominent position when Omar made him a member of the Electoral Convention. In spite of this, Othman kept him in the gubernatorial post for only one year. He replaced him with Waleed Ibn Aqabah, a cousin and a half-brother of the Third Caliph.

Waleed was a transgressor by the testimony of the Holy Qur'an. He embraced Islam after the year of the Hudeibayah truce. The Messenger sent him to the tribe of Banu Al-Mustaliq to collect their Zakat. Expecting his arrival, Banu Al-Mustaliq rode their horses to receive him. Beholding their coming toward him, he was frightened and went back to the Prophet before meeting them. He told the Prophet that Banu Al-Mustaliq wanted to kill him. Relying upon his information, the Muslims considered a punitive action against the Mustaliqites. But the Mustaliqites came to the Prophet and informed him that their intention was to re-

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12. Ibn Husham, Biography of the Prophet, Part 2, p. 409.

ceive and honor Waleed rather than to kill him. A revelation concerning Waleed and the Mustaliqites came down prohibiting the believers from reliance on information of unrighteous persons such as Waleed, because a transgressor is unworthy of reliance. Thus, we read in the Chapter of Al-Hujorat the following:

“O you who believe, if a transgressor comes to you with news, try to verify it, lest you harm people unwittingly, and afterward you would regret what you have done. And know that among you is God’s Apostle: Were he, in many matters, to follow your opinions, you would have certainly got into misfortune; but God has endeared the faith to you, and made it beautiful in your hearts, and He has made hateful to you the unbelief, wickedness and rebellion. Such indeed are those who walk in righteousness.”<sup>13</sup>

It is evident that Waleed had kept his pre-Islamic mentality for the rest of his life. He remained in the governorship of Kufah for five years, until witnesses from the people of Kufah testified that he took intoxicants. He was given the prescribed punishment and the Caliph was required to dismiss him. The situation of Waleed was not unknown to Othman and to the good Muslims, especially after the Holy Qur’an called him a transgressor.

It is reported that when Waleed came to replace Saad, Saad asked him: “Have you become wise or have we become fools?” Waleed replied: “Abu Is-Haq (the code name of Saad), neither of this is the case. It is the royal authority which some people take as lunch and then others take it as supper.” Saad replied: “You (Omayad) evidently have made the caliphate a kingdom.” Abdullah Ibn Mas-ood also said to Waleed: “I do not know whether you have become good or people have become bad.”<sup>14</sup>

As the Caliph was required to dismiss his foster brother,

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13. Chapter 49, verse 6-7, Ibn Husham recorded the event in his Biography of the Prophet, Part 2, p. 296.

14. Ibn Al-Atheer, in Al-Kamil, Part 3. p. 40.

after he was scandalized by his own deeds, the Caliph was expected to replace him by a companion such as Saad Ibn Abu Waqass, or Ammar Ibn Yasir or Abdullah Ibn Masood. But the Caliph did not do any of these. He replaced him by Sa-eed Ibn Al-Auss, another Omayyad. Although Sa-eed did not have a record as bad as that of Waleed, he was only one of the Omayyad youths whose governorship did not inspire people of Kufah with confidence nor rectify what needed to be rectified. We shall see later that the events took a turn from bad to worse during the days of Sa-eed.

### *In Bassrah*

When Omar died, Abu Musa Al-Ashari was the governor of Bassrah. He remained in his post for three or five years during the reign of Othman. A delegation from Bassrah came to the Caliph, complaining of Abu Musa's misuse of public funds. Abu Musa was not from the good companions. He once was accused by Omar of enriching himself at the expense of the Muslims, and Omar took from him the surplus of his wealth and put it back in the Islamic treasury. Yet he kept him in his post because of his extreme loyalty to the Second Caliph.

The Third Caliph was expected to investigate the complaint of the Bassrah's delegation and replace Abu Musa (if proven guilty) by a better companion. But Othman did not do that. Instead, he took the word of the complainers, dismissed him, and replaced him with Abdullah Ibn Amir, another Omayyad youth. Thus, within a few years of Othman's reign, the three important provinces of the Muslim state became Omayyad princedoms. The majority of their rulers were enemies of the Prophet and condemned by him or by the Holy Qur'an.

The ugly impact of their appointment to such high offices could have been minimized by a firm supervision on the part of the Caliph. It was easy for the Caliph to surround himself with righteous and intelligent advisors from among the companions. He could delegate to such advisors the

authority of investigating and supervising the administrations of these provinces. Unfortunately, supervision was completely absent. The chief advisor of the Caliph was his cousin Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam, another unscrupulous Omayyad. The power which was given to this Omayyad youth is not available to any prime minister of our time. As a matter of fact, Marwan was the actual caliph and Othman was only a figurehead.

Thus, the caliphate was transformed actually into an Omayyad kingdom. To prepare the Muslim world psychologically for the Omayyad rule, the Omayyad officials advocated the superiority of the Qureshites over the rest of the Arabs and the superiority of their clan over the rest of the Qureshites. They imposed a complete silence on the distinctions of the members of the House of the Prophet in general, and Ali in particular. They informed their subjects of the close relationship of the Omayyad to the Messenger. Their historical hostility to him and to the members of his House was not to be mentioned to these subjects who were new Muslims, unaware of the history of Islam.

Muaweyah one time met Ammar Ibn Yassir in Medina. In a heated argument, he told Ammar: "There are in Damascus one hundred thousands, plus an equal number of their sons and servants. They receive their annual salaries, and they do not know Ali and his kinship (to the Prophet) or Ammar and his early Islam, nor Al-Zubeir and his companionship."<sup>15</sup>

Jundub Ibn Abdullah Al-Azdi once tried to inform the people of Kufah about the distinctions of the Imam Ali. When he was reported to Waleed Ibn Aqabah, governor of Kufah, he jailed him and did not free him until some important people mediated for his freedom.<sup>16</sup>

### THE THIRD CALIPH AND HIS TWO PREDECESSORS

You may remember that Abdul-Rahman Ibn Ouf offer-

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15. Abdul-Fattah Abd Ai-Maqsoud, in *Al-Imam Ali Ibn Abu Tilab*, Part 2, p. 120.

16. Ibn Abu Al-Hadeed in his *Commentaries on Nahjul-Balaghah*, Vol. 2, p. 412.

ed Ali and Othman the caliphate, stipulating that the third caliph had to follow the path of the first two Caliphs.

Ali lost the caliphate because he rejected the stipulation. Othman won the caliphate because he accepted it. Let us see if he fulfilled his pledge to Abdul-Rahman and to the rest of the Muslims.

Neither of the two Caliphs appointed any of their relatives for any post in the Islamic provinces or cities. Othman, on the contrary, put his relatives in the gubernatorial posts of all the key provinces. Was he, by doing this, in accord with the way of the two Caliphs? The Third Caliph did not appear to believe that this was inconsistent with the way of his two predecessors. He vindicated the appointment of his relatives by the fact that Omar appointed Muaweyah and men like Muaweyah, such as Amr Ibn Al-Auss and Mugeerah Ibn Shubah for the governorship of Damascus, Egypt, and Kufah. Omar did not choose for these posts the best companions of the Prophet. The Third Caliph could have said also that Omar commissioned Waleed Ibn Aqabah as a collector of the Zakat in the land of Jazirah. Probably Omar also appointed Abdullah Ibn Abu Sarh for a minor position. The Third Caliph was right in saying this. But the fact remained that Omar did not appoint any of his relatives to any high or minor post. Othman appointed his relatives to high offices and gave them authorities without any appreciable supervision.

It is justifiable to say that Othman was not out of tune with his two predecessors by choosing his relatives to high offices, for the Omayyad influence began and grew to a noticeable degree during the time of Omar. It was only natural for that influence to be escalated during the reign of Othman, by the factor of time and the membership of Othman to the Omayyad clan. Had Omar been unwilling to see the Omayyad influence grow to that height, he should have kept the Omayyads away from his regime. He should not have formed the Electoral Convention, or at least should have excluded Othman from the Convention. Omar was well aware of Othman's extreme love for the members of his clan. Therefore, we cannot say positively that Othman,

by promoting his relatives, was inconsistent with the policy of Omar, for Omar is the one who started the Omayyads on the road to authority and enhanced their influence by indirectly putting their relative Othman in the highest office.

### *Loose Fiscal Policy*

The aspect in which the Third Caliph was clearly inconsistent with his predecessors was his loose fiscal policy. It is a well-known fact that the first two Caliphs had led a very simple and rugged life for themselves and their families. Whenever Omar ordered people to do something, he expected his relatives to be the example to the rest of the Muslims in following the order. The Third Caliph, on the contrary, led a very luxurious life, and he was constantly showering his relatives with gifts from the public funds. He privileged his relatives with huge grants while they were less adherent to the Islamic teaching than the rest of the Muslims.

### *Honoring Exile of the Prophet*

Al-Balathori reported that Othman gave his uncle Al-Hakam Ibn Abu Al-Auss three hundred thousand dirhams (equivalent to 300,000 dollars) after he brought him to Medina.<sup>17</sup>

This man was one of the worst enemies of the Messenger before he became a Muslim. After the Messenger conquered Mecca, Al-Hakam came to Medina, declaring Islam hypocritically and only for saving his life. Yet, he continued harassing the Messenger. He used to ridicule him by imitating his motions. The Messenger one time saw him peeping into his room from a slit in a door. The Messenger came out angrily and when he recognized him, he said: "Should anyone blame me for punishing this cursed insect?" Then he exiled him and his family to Ta-if, forbidding him and his children from dwelling in Medina.

By permitting Al-Hakam and his children to come back

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17. Al-Balathori, *Ansab Al-Ashraf*, Part 4, p. 28.



to Medina, Othman was in clear discord with the Messenger and the first two Caliphs, who did not allow Al-Hakam to come back to Medina in spite of Othman's mediation for him.

Othman granted his foster brother Abdullah Ibn Saad Ibn Abu Sarh the fifth of the spoils from the first expedition which Abdullah led in North Africa. Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam purchased the fifth of the spoils of the second expedition in North Africa for five hundred thousand dinars (equivalent to five million dollars). Then the Caliph allowed him the whole amount.<sup>18</sup>

Khalid Ibn Abdullah Ibn Oseid (another Omayyad) received from the treasury three hundred thousand dirhams when he visited the Caliph while accompanying the delegation. The Caliph also ordered one hundred thousand for each member of the delegation.

When the treasurer Abdullah Ibn Arqam refused to pay these huge sums, the Caliph proudly asked him: "Who are you to interfere with my order? You are only my treasurer." But Abdullah retorted, saying: "I did not believe that I was your treasurer. Your treasurer is one of your servants. I am the treasurer of the Muslims." Then he came with the keys of the treasury and hung them on the pulpit of the Prophet at the Mosque, resigning from his post.

The Caliph ordered three hundred thousand dirhams for Abdullah Ibn Arqam after he resigned; but, out of pity, Abdullah did not accept the grant.<sup>19</sup>

Othman also gave Sa-eed Ibn Al-Auss one hundred thousand dirhams. And when he married three or four of his daughters to men from Quraish, he gave each one of them one hundred thousand dinars. He gave his cousin Al-Harith Ibn Al-Hakam (exile of the Prophet) three hundred thousand dirhams. He appointed him as a collector of the Zakat of Qud-ah. When he brought the Zakat, the Caliph allowed him what he collected.<sup>20</sup>

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18. Ibn Al-Atheer, in *Al-Kamil*, Part 3, p. 49.

19. Taha Hussein, *Al-Fitnat*, *Al-Kubra*, Part 1, p. 193.

20. Dr. Taha Hussein, in his *Al-Fitnatul-Kubra*, Part 2, p. 193.

We ought not to forget that Abu Sufyan, the old man of Omayyad, also received from the Caliph two hundred thousand dirhams, yet the old man fought the Prophet for twenty-one years and professed Islam only to save his neck after he and the rest of the Meccans were completely defeated. He rejoiced on the defeat of the Muslims by the pagans of Hawazin in Hunain, saying: "Their retreat will not end before they reach the sea." (Ibn Husham recorded this in his *Biography of the Prophet*, Part 2, p. 443.)

The Third Caliph did not only shower his relatives with public funds, but he also granted them vast pieces of lands from the public properties.

Fadak, a land of orchards (which came to the ownership of the Holy Prophet because it was acquired by the Muslims without war), also was granted by Othman to some of his relatives. Fadak was supposed to be inherited totally or partly by Fatimah, daughter of the Prophet, but was nationalized by Abu Bakr because of a Hadith in which he reported that the Prophet said that what is left by the Prophets would be charity. However, Othman granted Fadak to Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam, the exile of the Prophet! (Abu Dawood, Sunan Abu Dawood, Part 2, p. 127.)

Othman did not follow the policy of his two predecessors concerning the public funds. He used to think that he had the right to spend out of the Muslims' funds as he liked. He was the Imam of the Muslims, and he had the right to do with their funds as he pleased. This is opposite of the precise and strict policy of the Second Caliph who used to exact from his appointees a full account concerning the public funds and ask whoever acquired a wealth among them: "How did you get this?" And he used to return the surplus of their wealth to the Islamic treasury.

### *Omar and Abu Hurairah*

Omar appointed Abu Hurairah to collect the taxes of Al-Bahrain. When he knew that Abu Hurairah had prospered, he said to him: "I sent you to Al-Bahrain while you were barefooted, unable to acquire shoes for your feet. I

have been informed that you have sold horses for sixteen hundred dinars.”

Abu Hurairah: “I had horses which multiplied by reproduction.”

Omar: “I shall withhold your salary and what you used to receive of food allotment, or you will bring me the surplus of your wealth.”

Abu Hurairah: “You have no right to do that.”

Omar: “Yes, by God, and I will hurt your back.” Then he hit him with his rod until his back bled and ordered him to bring him the surplus fund.

When Abu Hurairah brought the demanded amount, he said: “I hope that God will compensate me for this.”

Omar said: “That would be true if you had earned it legitimately and paid it willingly. By God, your mother did not beget you to reach the position of collector of tax revenues from Hajar, Al-Yamamah, and the remote area of Al-Bahrain, and to collect all that for yourself, and not for God or for the Muslims. She begot you only to be a shepherd of donkeys.” Then he dismissed him.<sup>21</sup>

There is a world of difference between this strict policy and that of Othman who used to give his relatives hundreds of thousands and sometimes millions of dirhams, seeing no wrong in doing that.

### *Other Grants to Other People*

The generosity of the Caliph was not limited to his relatives. It was extended to others whom he used to pay heavily either as a reward for their loyalty or as an appeasement to some potential opponents. He gave Zaid Ibn Thabit one hundred thousand dirhams. He gave Al-Zubeir six hundred thousand dirhams, and Talhah Ibn Obeidullah two hundred thousand dirhams.<sup>22</sup>

These two companions were members of the Electoral Convention which brought Othman to power.

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21. Ibn Abu Al-Hadeed, in his Commentaries on Nahjul-Balaghah, Vol. 3, p. 104.

22. Taha Hussein, Al-Fitnat Al-Kubra, Part 1, p. 77.

Neither of these two companions was in need of financial assistance. Both were wealthy with big holdings and big business. They had a great deal of real estate and of liquid funds.

It is worthy to note that history does not mention that the generosity of the Caliph was extended to the members of the House of the Prophet to whom the Holy Qur'an allotted, at the least, the sixth of the fifth of the spoils.

### *The Provincial Governors' Policy*

The governors of the provinces did what they were expected by adopting a policy similar to that of the Caliph in handling the Muslims' funds. It is reported that Waleed Ibn Aqabah took a loan from the treasury of Kufah while he was the governor of the city. When the loan matured, the treasurer Abdullah Ibn Mas-ood asked him to pay it back, but Waleed did not pay it. When the treasurer demanded the payment, the governor wrote to the Caliph complaining about the treasurer. The Caliph wrote to the treasurer, ordering him to leave Waleed alone with the loan and telling him that he was only the treasurer of the Caliph. Upon this Ibn Mas-ood angrily resigned.<sup>23</sup>

The Muslims of Kufah were lucky enough to find a man like Abdullah Ibn Mas-ood who had the courage to stand up to Waleed and require him to pay a loan. The Muslims of Syria were not so fortunate. Muaweyah was an absolute ruler of Syria with no limit to his power. He was living like a king, handling the public funds of Syria as he was handling his own funds, free of supervision. He used the public funds for purchasing loyalty and support of the chiefs of the Syrian tribes and men of influence. He was preparing himself to succeed Othman, and he had sufficient time for such a preparation.

As a matter of fact, Muaweyah started his preparation for his goal during the days of Omar. His extravagancy was evident to Omar himself. When the Second Caliph went to the Syrian front he was angered by the high standard of

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23. Al-Balathori, in *Ansab Al-Ashraf*, Part 4, p. 31.

Muaweyah's luxurious life. But Muaweyah convinced the Caliph of the soundness of his policy, using his proximity to the Roman Empire as an excuse for his extravagance.

It is amazing that the Caliph required Abu Hurairah to give a serious account for sixteen hundred dinars, but he failed to ask Muaweyah how he could maintain his lavish way of life.

Muaweyah was not the only governor who used the public funds for his own interest. The rest of Othman's appointed officials followed the same method in proportion to their authority and lack of supervision. All were working for the goal of transforming the caliphate into a despotic rule and the Muslim World into an Omayyad kingdom.

This unscrupulous policy had many consequences:

(1) The growth of the wealth of the wealthy class in the Islamic society, Many of the lucky individuals who received generous gifts from the Caliph and his appointed officials invested what they received of funds or portions of it in real estate and business. This yielded them enormous profits. Many of the companions who were highly paid during the days of Omar became considerably wealthy through investing the surplus of their salaries in real estate and trades. The wealth of these companions was expected to grow by the passage of time. When Othman allowed the companions to live outside Medina (ending the ban which was imposed by Omar on the companions), many of the prosperous companions found new avenues for multiplying their fortunes. They purchased buildings, orchards and lands in Iraq and other provinces. The Third Caliph also gave vast public lands in Hijaz to many of his relatives, friends and supporters.

Transactions and exchanges of real estates between wealthy owners living in Iraq and their counterparts in Hijaz and Yemen continued, and the Caliph encouraged these transactions.<sup>24</sup> Thus, many deals were made and the fortunes of these enterprisers were increased rapidly.

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24. Ibn Al-Atheer, in *Al-Kamil*, Part 3, p. 52.

Many of the companions and others became multi-millionaires. The fortune of Al-Zubeir amounted to forty million dirhams<sup>25</sup> and that of Talhah to thirty millions<sup>26</sup> and that of Abdul-Rahman Ibn Ouf to about three millions.<sup>27</sup>

(2) The other result of the Third Caliph's handling of public funds was the increase of the pressure on the tax payers of the conquered countries. The generosity of the Caliph and his appointed officials in handling the public funds and their gifts to the individuals required liquid funds which could not come but through overtaxation of the conquered nations. This aspect is not mentioned clearly in our history, because the conquered nations did not have political power or voice.

A dialogue between the Caliph and Amr Ibn Al-Auss (who was once the governor of Egypt and was replaced by Abdullah Ibn Abu Sarh) reveals the mounting pressure on the conquered nations. The Caliph said to Amr: "The camels are giving much more milk after you left." (He meant that more funds were coming from Egypt after his dismissal.) And Amr replied: "yes, but their babies have perished!" (He meant that by exacting more taxes from the Egyptians, the Egyptians were being impoverished.)<sup>28</sup>

## THE GROWTH OF OPPOSITION

Early opposition to the Third Caliph had started at the beginning of his reign by Ammar Ibn Yassir and Al-Miqdad Ibn Al-Aswad, who were outstanding companions and free of any political or material ambitions. That opposition was calmed during the first few years of the Third Caliph's reign, due to the lack of support by the public and because what they expected to happen did not happen during the early period of his reign.

However, the events which took place later contributed to the rapid growth of the opposition. The motive behind

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25. Ibn Saad, in his *Al-Tabaquat*, Part 3, p. 110.

26. Ibn Saad, *Al-Tabaquat*, Part 3, p. 222.

27. Ibn Saad, *Al-Tabaquat*, Part 3, p. 126.

28. *Al-Fitnat Al-Kubra*, Part 1.

the oppositions was either religious or political and sometimes it was both.

Abdul-Rahman Ibn Ouf, the one who selected Othman and brought him to power, was one of the early critics of the Caliph. He was displeased to see his selected Caliph following a policy opposed to that of the first two Caliphs, in spite of his pledge at the time of his selection to follow their policy. No doubt, many companions blamed Abdul-Rahman for selecting Othman and depriving Ali of the caliphate. They held him responsible for the Caliph's policy in handling the public funds and imposing the authority of the Omayyads on the Muslims.

Abdul-Rahman changed his heart towards his man and turned 180 degrees from the Caliph's extreme supporter to the Caliph's hostile critic.

The road which Othman took probably showed Abdul-Rahman that the caliphate would continue in the Omayyads after the death of Othman. The relatives of the Caliph had become very powerful and capable of keeping the caliphate in their clan. With their unlimited influence on the Caliph's mind, they were in a position to convince him to make one of them his successor. Thus, Abdul-Rahman belatedly discovered that he was maintaining a false hope of becoming Othman's successor.

We may remember that Ali told Abdul-Rahman after he selected Othman: "By God, you gave him the leadership only to return it to you. May God plight you and him with a reciprocal and constant animosity!!!"

If Abdul-Rahman had a good memory, he could recall the warning which he received in his dream during the days of the Electoral Convention. He dreamt of a green prairie into which a beautiful camel entered and passed through without touching it. It was followed by two camels, one after another, and they followed its behavior. Then a fourth camel came and ate all he could from the grass of the prairie. Abdul-Rahman interpreted his dream by thinking that the fourth camel would be the third caliph who would not follow the precepts of the Prophet and the first two caliphs in handling the public funds.

Because of this dream, Abdul-Rahman did not want to be the third caliph, lest he would be the fourth camel. Had Abdul-Rahman remembered that vision, he would have realized that he did not heed the warning which it contained. He would have realized that he had chosen the man whom he should have left out and left out the man whom he should have chosen. Had he selected Ali, he would have avoided the nation all the tragic events that took place later.

You may recall that Omar also saw in his dream that a man entered a garden and picked every fresh and ripe fruit, taking them to himself and putting them under him. The two visions resembled each other and so did the responses of the two dreamers. Both chose the picker and the gluttonous eater.

### *Two Other Members of the Convention*

Talhah and Al-Zubeir, who were also members of the Electoral Convention, joined the opposition. Al-Zubeir was less violent in his opposition than Talhah.

It is difficult to believe that the two companions opposed Othman because of his mishandling of the public funds. Of course, the Caliph granted his relatives huge sums of money, but the two companions also had their big shares of his generosity. The share of Al-Zubeir was six hundred thousand dirhams and Talhah received two hundred thousand dirhams. They could not disallow the Caliph's grant to his relatives while legalizing it for themselves.

It seems that both men were aspirants to succeed Othman. When Omar granted them candidacy to the high office in the Electoral Convention, he actually qualified them for leadership. The enormous wealth of the two companions enhanced their importance in their own eyes and in the eyes of many Muslims. Tallah gained numerous supporters in Bassrah and so did Al-Zubeir in Kufah. Like Abdul-Rahman, the two companions were frightened by the rapid growth of the Omayyads' power which made them capable of competing with any companion for the leadership.

It was disturbing to them to think that Othman might



appoint Muaweyah or another Omayad as a successor. The turn of events indicated that the Omayads would keep the caliphate in their clan, blocking the road of other Qureshites to the high office. The two companions realized that silence would contribute to the Omayads' success in achieving their goal. For this, they decided to oppose the Caliph and try to end his reign before he chose an Omayad successor. This would enable one of the two companions to succeed the Caliph.

### *Ayeshah*

Ayeshah, wife of the Prophet, also joined the opposition. She became an open critic of Othman, accusing him of taking a direction opposite to that of the Prophet. She occasionally displayed a garment of the Prophet, saying that the garment of the Prophet had not yet deteriorated, but Othman had brought the precepts of the Prophet into deterioration. She used to call him Naathal (a heavily bearded Jew). The historians recorded that she used to say: "Kill Naathal because he deserted the faith."<sup>31</sup>

It seems that her motive was merely political rather than religious. She could not be angered by Othman's violation of the Islamic Law, because she allowed herself to commit a much bigger violation of God's commandments. She opposed Ali who was the most adherent to the Book of God and the precepts of the Prophet. She was more violent in her opposition to the brother of the Messenger than in her opposition to Othman. She criticized Othman because he injured some of the companions and mishandled the Muslims' funds, yet she waged a war in which thousands of Muslims lost their lives. Killing the Muslims is a much bigger sin than injuring them or usurping some of their funds.

Her motive in opposing Othman was identical to that of Talhah and Al-Zubeir. She wanted her cousin Talhah

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31. Al-Tabari, *History of Messengers and Kings*, about the events of the year 36, p. 3112, and Ibn Al-Atheer, in *Al-Kamil*, Part 3, p. 102.

or her brother-in-law Al-Zubeir to succeed Othman. The growth of Talhah's influence in his opposition to the Caliph was extremely pleasing to her.

Al-Tabari reported that Ayeshah said to Ibn Abbas: "You are a man of understanding, wisdom and expression. I ask you by God not to detract people from Talhah. The situation of Othman has become obvious. People from various cities have gathered for a great event which is about to take place. I am informed that Talhah is already in control of the houses of the public funds and possesses their keys. I think that he, God willing, will follow the path of his cousin Abu Bakr." Ibn Abbas retorted, saying: "Mother, if anything happens to Othman, people will resort to our man (Ali)." Ayeshah, of course, did not agree with him, but she said to him: "Ibn Abbas, I do not want to antagonize you or argue with you."<sup>32</sup>

She was looking at the events with the eyes of Talhah and Al-Zubeir. Her hope that one of the two men would reach the caliphate through co-operation with Othman was withering gradually by the rapid growth of the Omayyads' power and the continuation of Othman in his office. It became evident to her and the two companions that the Caliph would follow only the advice of people such as Marwan and Muaweyah, and that these advisers would counsel him to choose an Omayyad successor.

Ayeshah and the two companions thought that their silence would render an assistance to the Omayyads in fulfilling their goal. For this the two companions raised their voices against the Caliph, and Ayeshah called upon the Muslims to kill him.

### *Amr Ibn Al-Auss*

Amr Ibn Al-Auss joined the opposition. This politician did not have the ambition to become a caliph. He was not from the early companions or a member of the Electoral Convention, nor did he have the needed influence to make

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32. Ibn Abu Al-Hadeed, Commentaries on Nahjul-Balaghah, Vol. 2, p. 506.

him ambitious to reach the high office. His opposition was motivated by the desire to avenge himself. He was the governor of Egypt during the days of Omar. He wanted to stay in his post, but Othman dismissed him and replaced him by Adbullah Ibn Saad Ibn Abu Sarh. He came back to Medina, waiting for the opportunity to jump the Caliph. When Ayeshah and others started their campaign against Othman, Amr became a noted agitator. He used his intelligence and wiliness in instigating people against the Caliph.<sup>33</sup>

When Othman was killed, Amr joined the seekers of the revenge for Othman's blood because Muaweyah promised him the governorship of Egypt.

#### OPPOSITION FROM NON-QURESHITE COMPANIONS

The Qureshite companions were mostly politically motivated in their opposition to Othman. The opposition that was religiously motivated came from outstanding non-Qureshite companions. Most noted among these in the history of that period was:

##### *Abu Tharr.*

When the third Caliph granted his cousin Marwan five million dirhams and Zeid Ibn Thabit one hundred thousand dirhams, and Harith, Marwan's brother, three hundred thousand dirhams, Abu Tharr raised his voice repeatedly reciting the following Qur'anic verse: "Give the news of a painful punishment to those who treasure gold and silver and do not spend them in the way of God." Othman sent his messengers to Abu Tharr, prohibiting him from such a recital. Abu Tharr protested, saying: "Does Othman want to prevent me from reciting the Book of God and denouncing those who disobey the commandment of God? By God, it is more desirable to me and better for me to please God by displeasing Othman, rather than displeasing God by

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33. Ibn Al-Atheer, Al-Kamil Part 3, p. 82.

pleasing Othman.”<sup>34</sup> This attitude angered Othman.

It was not difficult for Othman to solve the problem of Abu Tharr and all other critics, and Abu Tharr himself prescribed to Othman the solution of the problem. He told him one day: “Follow the path of your two predecessors, and no one will criticize you.” But the Caliph was not of this opinion. He wanted to solve the problem by punishing whomever he could. Evidently, he did not know that medicating the problem of sincere criticism by violence is bound to bring him bigger problems.

### *Abu Tharr in Exile*

It was difficult for the Caliph to punish the Qureshite critics. They were too powerful for him to punish. Abu Tharr and others like him, in spite of their brilliant Islamic record, were neither powerful, nor wealthy. The Caliph chose for these good companions a kind of punishment which was inappropriate and inapplicable to them. He chose for Abu Tharr punishment by exile which is prescribed by the Holy Qur’an for those who are at war with God and His Messenger, and the makers of mischief in the land. Abu Tharr was not one of these. He was rather a righteous companion, whose motives were prohibiting evil and enjoining good. He did not challenge the authority of the Caliph, nor did he call for a revolt against him.

The Messenger of God was criticized by a hypocrite who told him: “You ought to be just in distributing the spoils among Muslims.” The Prophet did not exile him, nor did he punish him. He only said to him: “Woe to you. If I do not execute justice, who will?”

Abu Bakr said to his electors: “Obey me as long as I obey God. If I do not obey Him, you owe me no obedience.”

Omar used to say: “When you see a crookedness in me try to straighten me.”

### *Abu Tharr and Muaweyah*

Othman did not take the attitude of his predecessors.

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34. Ibn Abu Al-Hadeed, Commentaries on Nahjul-Balaghah, Vol. 1, p. 240.

He exiled Abu Tharr to Syria, placing him under the authority of Muaweyah, who was actually a government within the government. Seeing the extravagancy of Muaweyah and his mishandling of the public funds, Abu Tharr raised his voice against him. When Muaweyah built his famous palace, called Al-Khadra, Abu Tharr said to him: "If this is from the Muslims' fund, it is a theft. If it is from your own fund, it is an extravagancy."

Abu Tharr used to shout at the door of Muaweyah, saying: "God, may Thou curse those who enjoin good and do not do it. May Thou curse those who prohibit evil and do it."

### *Permanent Exile*

This irritated Muaweyah. He complained about Abu Tharr to the Caliph. The Caliph recalled Abu Tharr to Medina, and he was returned to it in a very unmerciful way.<sup>35</sup> When he arrived in Medina, the Caliph found him persisting in his critical attitude towards his regime. For this he ordered him to leave Medina. Abu Tharr asked his permission to go back to Damascus, or to go to Iraq or Egypt or to Mecca, according to some reports. The Caliph did not permit him to do so. He ordered him to go to the desert of Najd, saying to him: "Go in this direction and do not go beyond Al-Rabathah."

The Caliph ordered people not to speak to Abu Tharr nor give him a send off. When Abu Tharr was departing, Marwan went with him to prevent people from talking to him. No one dared to be with Abu Tharr at his departure except the Imam Ali, his two sons Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein, his brother Aqeel and Ammar Ibn Yasir. By doing this, they actually defied the order of the Caliph. This added to the deterioration of the relation between the Imam and the Caliph. Of the Imam's valedictory words to Abu Tharr were the following:

"Abu Tharr, you opposed the rulers because they disobeyed God. Put your hope in Him. The rulers feared you for personal interest, and you feared they would

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35. Ibn Al-Atheer, Al-Kamil, Part 3, p. 56.

compromise your religion. Leave in their hands what they want to protect and run away with what you want to protect. These rulers are in a great need for the things you tried to deprive them of, and you are in no need for the things they deprived you of. You will know who has the happy fate and who is more enviable. Should the heavens and the earth close in on a righteous servant of God, He will grant him an exit. Let the truth be your only friend and falsehood be your only enemy. Had you approved their way, they would have loved you; and had you shared the spoils with them, they would have trusted you.”<sup>36</sup>

Some historians say that Abu Tharr left Medina to Rabathah willingly, but it seems improbable that Abu Tharr had chosen to become bedouin living in the desert rather than being in the city of the Prophet. However, it is certain that he was exiled to Damascus before he left to Rabathah, then he was brought back to Medina. He was not consulted in his exile nor in his return.

Abu Tharr settled in Rabathah, living constantly there in difficulty and intolerable poverty until he died. When he died there were not enough people to bury him. Had not Abdullah Ibn Mas-ood with a few others (including Malik Al-Ashtar) passed by, Abu Tharr would not have been buried.

The exile of Abu Tharr to Rabathah was a big political mistake on the part of the Caliph. The good Muslims were shocked by the exile of this outstanding companion, for he was of an indomitable spirit in his endeavors for the truth. He was a beloved of the Messenger, and the Messenger said about him: “There is no one under Heaven and above the earth that is truer than Abu Tharr.” The righteous Muslims felt toward what happened to Abu Tharr as they felt towards the great martyrs of the truth, whose souls were filled with dedication to high ideals for which they lived and died.

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36. Nahjul-Balaghah, Part 2, pp.12-13.

### *Abdullah Ibn Mas-ood*

Abdullah Ibn Mas-ood, another non-Qureshite outstanding companion, also joined the opposition. Like Abu Tharr, Abdullah had no political or material ambition. He was the treasurer of Kufah province and he resigned angrily when the Caliph wrote to him: “. . . You are only our treasurer, leave Waleed (the Omayyad governor of Kufah) alone with what he borrowed from the treasury.” It is reported that Abdullah Ibn Mas-ood used to deliver a weekly sermon in which he included the following words: “Certainly the truest is the Book of God and the best guidance is the guidance of Mohammad. And the worst deed is that which does not conform with the teaching of God and His Messenger. For every such deed is an innovation, and every innovation is a heresy and every heresy leads to Hell.”<sup>37</sup>

Waleed informed the Caliph of Ibn Mas-ood's insinuating speeches and the Caliph summoned him. When Ibn Mas-ood entered the Mosque of the Prophet, Othman said to the congregation: “The one that entered the Mosque is an evil insect which causes a person to vomit and secrete when it walks on its food.” Ibn Mas-ood said: “I am not so, but I was a companion of the Prophet at Badr, Ohod, Hudeibayah, the Moat, and Hunain.” Othman ordered one of his servants to throw Abdullah out of the Mosque. The servant carried him on his shoulders and violently threw him outside the Mosque.<sup>38</sup> Some of his ribs were broken. Then the Caliph withheld his salary. Abdullah lived two or three years after that, continuing his opposition to Othman. When he died, he willed that Othman should not pray over him, and Ammar Ibn Yassir was his executor. Ammar buried Abdullah without informing the Caliph of Abdullah's death.

### *And Ammar Ibn Yasir*

Ammar was a man of the earliest opposition to Oth-

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37. Dr. Taha Hussein, *Al-Fitnat Al-Kubra*, Part 1, p. 160.

38. Dr. Taha Hussein, *Al-Fitnat Al-Kubra*, Part 1, pp. 160-161.

man. He called upon the Muslims to fight the community of Quraish because it chose Othman for leadership and left Ali out. Like Ali, Ammar saw in the personality of Othman a potential bridge over which the caliphate would pass from the good companions of Mohammad to the Omayyads. The sequence of the events was destined only to confirm to Ammar and others what they expected. What happened to Abu Tharr and Abdullah Ibn Mas-ood made Ammar more serious in his opposition to Othman. Ibn Yasir was not the kind of man who keeps silent when he sees what is in conflict with the Book of God and the teachings of the Prophet.

Such opposition was expected to put Ammar in danger of severe punishment from the Caliph. Othman wanted to exile him as he had Abu Tharr, but Ali and other companions raised strong objections which made him threaten to exile Ali himself. But Ali dared him to do that.

There were some gems of great value in the treasury and Othman gave those gems to his ladies. People talked about that, and Othman was angered by their talk. He said while he was giving a sermon: "We shall take what we need from the treasury, even if some people would be displeased." Ali replied: "Then you shall be prevented and stopped." And Ammar said: "I make God my witness that I am one of the first people who are displeased." Othman retorted angrily: "Do you dare say that to me? Take him."

He was taken and Othman went to the place where Ammar was confined. He beat him up until Ammar fainted and he stayed in swoon until he missed the noon, afternoon, and sunset prayers. When he came back from his swoon, he made his ablution, made up his prayers, and said: "Praise be to God. This is not the first time I was tortured for my endeavors in the way of God."<sup>39</sup>

It is reported that a group of companions (among them Talhah, Al-Zubeir, Al-Miqdad, and Ammar) wrote to Othman a letter in which they criticized a number of Othman's deeds, accused him of betraying his religion and warned him that they would fight him. Ammar delivered the letter

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39. Dr. Taha Hussein, *Al-Fitnat Al-Kubra*, Part 1, p. 167.



to Othman. When Othman read a portion of the letter, he asked Ammar: "Are you the only audacious among them to confront me with this?" Ammar answered: "I am your best advisor among them." Othman said to him: "Son of Sumayah (Ammar's mother), you have lied. Ammar retorted "I am by God, son of Summayah and son of Yasir." Othman ordered his servants to lay Ammar on the floor and hold his hands and his legs. Then Othman kicked him with his foot in the stomach. This caused him to have a hernia. Ammar was old and weak, and he fainted.

Ammar was the most outspoken and the highest voice against Othman. His opposition to Othman counted heavily because of his brilliant past and because of what the Holy Prophet said about him.

### OPPOSITION OUTSIDE MEDINA

The Qureshite Aristocracy in the Islamic society began at the beginning of the reign of the First Caliph. In his argument for the Qureshite leadership at the "Saqifat" conference, Abu Bakr said to the natives of Medinah that the Arabs would not accept a non-Qureshite leadership. For Quraish was the highest community among the Arabs and the community of the most honorable city.

Upon this, the Medinites conceded the leadership to the Qureshites. Thus, the majority of the Meccan and Medinite companions conceived it as tribal superiority. By this the Qureshite supremacy was established, though the Faith of Islam, the religion of equality, denies any form of aristocracy.

This aristocracy grew during the reign of the Second Caliph and peaked during the reign of the Third Caliph. The notion of Qureshite superiority evolved during Othman's reign and went far enough to view the Muslim world as a Qureshite Kingdom. This was destined to have a negative reaction on the part of the enlightened men who knew that Islam is a religion of equality and brotherhood. The Message of Islam aims at elevating every Muslim and dignifying all believers in God rather than dignifying a minority at the expense of millions.

The righteous Muslims were disturbed by Quraish's claim of superiority in the name of religion, while the Omayyads who became the leaders of the Qureshites were of the least righteous among the Muslims.

The spark of opposition outside Medina started in Kufah. Most of its people were Yemenites. It is reported that the beginning of this opposition took place during the time of Sa-eed Ibn Al-Auss, who succeeded Waleed Ibn Aqabah in the gubernatorial office of Kufa. Historians disagree on the details of this event.

It is reported that some of the leaders of the city, while they were visiting the governor, spoke of the orchards of Kufa. A dialogue between them and the city Chief of Police Abdul-Rahman Ibn Khumeis took place and went as follows:

Ibn Khumeis: "I wish all these orchards were owned by the governor and you, the people of Kufah, owned better than these orchards."

Malik Al-Ashtar: "Wish the governor better than these orchards but do not wish him to own our properties."

Ibn Khumeis: "How did my wish harm you to make you so frown on me? By God, if the governor wishes, he would have these orchards."

Al Ashtar: "By God, if he wants that, he will not have it."

Sa-eed (angrily): "All these orchards are actually Quraish's garden."

Al-Ashtar: "Do you make what we won through our spears and what God has given us a garden for you and your people?"

And others spoke, supporting Al-Ashtar.

Al-Ashtar: "Is anybody here? Don't let this man get away with what he said."

They jumped Ibn Khumeis, treading on him severely until he fainted. Then they dragged him by his feet. Finally, his face was sprayed with water until he woke up.

Ibn Khumeis said to Sa-eed: "The people whom you selected have killed me."

Sa-eed: "No one shall spend the evening with me after this."

Other historians recorded that some people spoke in the presence of Sa-eed of the generosity of Talhah Ibn Obeidullah, and that comments by the governor and his visitors went as follows:

Sa-eed: "A man that has the wealth of Talhah and his holdings ought to be generous. Should I possess what Talhah possesses, I would make you live in prosperity."

A young man from the Asad Tribe: "I wish that you owned all the orchards that are on the two sides of the Euphrates."

This irritated some of the men who were present and made them speak harshly to the youth.

The father of the youth: "He is too young. Do not punish him for what he said."

The irritated men: "He is wishing Sa-eed our own properties." They jumped the youth. His father wanted to defend him. They beat the father and the son until they fainted. The members of the tribe of Asad learned about the event and came encircling the palace. Sa-eed persuaded them to leave and they left.<sup>40</sup>

Both versions of the event agree that Al-Ashtar and others with him stayed away from the governor and spoke loudly against Sa-eed and the Caliph. This was the occasion which made the opposition surface in Kufah. Whether the first or second report was the truth, the occasion indicates that people during that time were fed up with Quraish, its leaders, their big claims and their over-reaching hands.

The event was actually the straw that broke the camel's back. The sequence of events was inevitably leading to some political explosion.

Abdullah Ibn Mas-ood's sermons in which he criticized the policy of Othman and his officers helped to open the eyes of the people of Kufah on the corruption in the government.

Abu Tharr's exile was also a factor in fermenting the

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40. Ibn Al-Atheer, Al-Kamil, Vol. 3, pp. 71-72.

opposition. We have advanced that Al-Ashtar and others from Kufah were with Ibn Mas-ood at the time of the oppressed companion's burial.

What happened afterwards to Abdullah Ibn Mas-ood was also another factor. People of Kufah had a great esteem for this outstanding companion who was violently thrown out of the Holy Mosque by order of the Caliph.

People of Kufah knew Ammar Ibn Yasir and his brilliant record in Islam. He was the governor of their city during the reign of Omar. They had a great respect towards this outstanding companion. What happened to him at the hand of the Third Caliph was also an additional factor which made the explosion of the opposition from the righteous people of Kufah an expected event. The fire was about to start and it found its spark at Sa-eed's occasion.

The opposition of Kufah received the same kind of punishment Abu Tharr received. Exile became the regular punishment for the criticism of the government; and Damascus became the destination of the exiled critics. There they received their discipline at the hands of Muaweyah, the strong man of the Islamic state.

The exiled Kufans were kept at the church of Mariam. Muaweyah met them, spoke to them and lectured them. The topic of his lecture was the distinction of Quraish in the Islamic and pre-Islamic history. He tried to substantiate the superiority of Quraish by the fact that all communities were invaded except the Qureshites whom God protected. He mentioned also that God made the caliphate in the Qureshite companions of the Prophet. Thus, they are the qualified ones for leadership. Then he told them that God protected Quraish while they were unbelievers. "Do you think that He will not protect them while they are following His religion."<sup>41</sup>

He told them also that Abu Sufyan (his father) was the most honorable and the son of the most honorable among the Qureshites except the Prophet, then he added: "I think

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41. Ibn Al-Atheer, Al-Kamil, Vol, 3, p. 70.

that if Abu Sufyan were the father of all people, all people would have been wise.”<sup>42</sup>

Sa-sa-ah Ibn Souhan belied him, saying: “Adam was better than Abu Sufyan. God created him by His own hand, breathed in him from His spirit and ordered the angels to bow to him. He was the father of mankind. Yet we see among them the good and the weak, the foolish and the wise.”

The logic of Muaweyah was full of distortion of facts. He said that his father Abu Sufyan was the best man after the Messenger (including Abu Bakr and Omar).

He forgot that the Divine protection to the Qureshite was not for the sake of Abu Sufyan, his children and their likes from the Qureshites. It was rather for the sake of the Sacred House and for the sake of the Messenger, the best of the descendants of Abraham. It was also in response to the prayer of Abraham, the Prophet of God, of which the Holy Qur’an informs us:

“And when Abraham said: ‘My Lord, make this a safe town and give its settlers of fruits, to those of them who believe in God and the Hereafter.’ The Almighty said: ‘And whoever of them disbelieves, I will give them a respite. Then I will drive them to the chastisement of Fire; terrible is the fate.’ ”<sup>43</sup>

Muaweyah did not know that the caliphate in the offspring of Abraham, including the Qureshites, was made by appointment from God. That appointment did not reach the unjust among them. We read in the Book of God:

“And remember when God tested Abraham by commandments, and he fulfilled them. The Almighty said: ‘I am making you Imam of the people.’ Abraham said: ‘And make imams from my offsprings.’ The Almighty said: ‘My covenant will not include the unjust.’ ”<sup>44</sup>

History tells us that Muaweyah freed the exiles and

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42. Ibn Al-Atheer, Vol. 3, p. 71.

43. Chapter, 2, verse 127.

44. Chapter 2, verse 125.

when they went back to Kufah, they resumed their opposition. Consequently, they were exiled to Homs. They were placed under the authority of Abdul-Rahman Ibn Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed. This was harsher on them and more violent than Muaweyah. They showed him repentance, and he released them. Al-Ashtar went back to the Caliph, and the Caliph permitted him to go wherever he chose. He went back to Homs. When opposition grew stronger in Kufah, Al-Ashtar went back to it. He and Yazeed Ibn Qais led a multitude to a place called Al-Jarah to prevent Sa-eed Ibn Al-Auss from re-entering Kufah. Sa-eed went back to Medina and the Kufans demanded from Othman to replace Sa-eed with Abu Musa.

We may realize the bitterness which exiled men used to feel when we read a message from Malik Al-Ashtar to Othman as an answer to the Caliph's letter to the people of Kufah, reprimanding the opposition:

"From Malik Ibn Al-Harth to the tested and sinful Caliph who is deviating from the precepts of his Prophet and turning his back on the rule of the Holy Qur'an. "We have read your message. You ought to prohibit yourself and your officers from injustice, aggression and exiling our righteous men. This will make us content to obey you. You alleged that we have wronged ourselves. This is your conjecture which caused you to perish (spiritually) and made you consider inequity a justice and the wrong right. As to what we desire, we want you to change and repent and to ask God His forgiveness for incriminating our righteous men, exiling our good people, driving us out of our homes and ruling us by our youth. We desire that you appoint Abdullah Ibn Qais, Abu Musa, governor of our city. We ask you to keep your Waleed and Sa-eed away from us."<sup>45</sup>

The Caliph responded to this by appointing Abu Musa governor of Kufah.

The opposition to the Caliph's policy was not confined to Kufah. It was extended to Bassrah in Iraq, and also to

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45. Al-Balathori, *Ansabul-Ashraf*, Part 4, p. 46.

Egypt. Historians inform us that Mohammad Ibn Abu Bakr and Mohammed Ibn Abu Hutheifah went to Egypt and instigated the people against Othman. With the presence of Abdullah Ibn Saad Ibn Abu Sarh in Egypt as its governor, the two Mohammads did not need to bring to the Egyptians any additional evidence of the corruption in the government. It is reported that an Egyptian went to Medina, complaining of the governor to the Caliph. When the complainer came back to Egypt, the governor killed him.

It is reported also that a group of companions in Medina wrote to other companions at different provinces, saying: "If you want to make Jihad, come to us. The religion of Mohammad is corrupted by our Caliph. By this, people were turned against him."<sup>46</sup>

### NOW PEOPLE REMEMBERED ALI

The regressing developments of the political events made the non-Qureshite Muslims realize the gravity of the erroneous attitude of the Qureshites toward Ali. Now they could clearly see the magnitude of the mistake which the members of the Electoral Convention had committed when they diverted the caliphate from him to Othman. By doing that, they drove the nation into a crisis which it had never experienced before. It became obvious to the people of wisdom that the nation would not have had to be confronted with such a crisis if Ali were the Caliph. Thus, they began to think that Ali's leadership was the solution to the problems of the nation.

People spoke of Ali loudly and Othman started to see that Ali's existence and his presence in Medina added to his difficulties. He asked him to leave Medina for his land in Yunbu, that people might forget him; but when the crisis grew in dimension, he asked him to come back to Medina that he might shield him against danger. Then Ibn Abbas came to him with a message from Othman, asking him to leave for Yunbu, hoping that people would stop circulating his name. The Imam said:

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46. Ibn Al-Atheer, Al-Kamil, Vol. 3, pp. 73 and 83.

“Ibn Abbas, Othman wants to treat me like a camel, going back and forth to fill the buckets with water. He told me to go to Yunbu, then he asked me to come back. Now he is asking me to go to Yunbu again. By God, I have defended him until I feared that I am committing a sin.”<sup>47</sup>

Ali faced in Othman a problem bigger than the problem which Othman was facing. It was in the hands of Othman to solve all his problems by changing his policy in handling the public funds, dismissing his relative officials, and keeping Marwan away from him. This could have regained him the confidence of the people and their satisfaction.

Ali, on the other hand, did not possess the means to solve his problem and the problem of the nation in Othman. He was seeing through the light of God that the future and the fate of the nation would be decided to a great extent by what would happen to Othman. Othman had embarked on a policy which would enable the Omayyads to rule the Muslim world for generations to come. Yet the Omayyads were noted for their lack of sincerity toward Islam. They embraced Islam only after they were completely defeated.

Ali knew them very well as men and as children. He is the one who broke their back and humiliated them until they adopted the faith of Islam reluctantly. He knew that if they had the authority they would devour the public fund, enslave the servants of God and corrupt His religion.

Othman had three alternatives: (1) Resign; (2) persist in his policy and refuse to resign, or (3) change his policy drastically. The first two alternatives were evil and the third was not expected. If he were to persist in his policy, he would be killed. His murder would be a terrible and ugly event. He would be the first imam to be killed by the Muslims. The Omayyads, the relatives of the Caliph, already possessed enough power to enable them to challenge the good Muslims by waging war, avenging his death, using it for seizing authority.

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47. Nahjul-Balaghah, Part 2, p. 233.



Should Othman be forced to resign and people elect a man to succeed him, the Omayyads, having so much power, would not surrender. They would be able to claim that Othman was the legitimate Caliph and that forcing him out of office would not remove the legality of his leadership. By this, they would arrive at what they want. And it would become easier for them to reach their goal than if he were killed.

The third alternative was not expected. There was nothing in the behavior of Othman to indicate the possibility of the needed change. Even if he wanted to change his financial policy and dismiss his wicked relatives, Marwan would dissuade him from doing that, and he did not possess the will-power which would make him immune from his influence.

Ali knew all that. Yet, he tried his best to reach the third alternative in order to avoid the evil of the other two alternatives. Historians inform us that a group of the companions of the Messenger who were living in Medina, wrote to the companions who were settling on the borders of the Muslim state, saying: "Come back to Medina. The "Jihad" is here." People spoke ill of Othman and none of the companions defended him except Zied Ibn Thabit, Abu Osaid Al-Sa-idy, Kaab Ibn Malik and Hassan Ibn Thabit. These were loyal to the Caliph because they had received his generous gifts.

### *The Imam Mediates*

The companions met together and spoke to Ali to mediate between them and Othman. He met the Caliph and spoke to him, saying:

"The people behind me asked me to mediate between you and them. By God, I don't know what to tell you. Nor do I know something which you don't know. Nor can I point to matters of which you are ignorant. You have seen, heard and accompanied the Messenger of God and acquired the honor of being his son-in-law. You are not less expected to do good than Ibn Abu Quhafah (Abu Bakr) and Ibn Al-Khattab (Omar).

You are closer than both of them to the Messenger of God and you have acquired through marriage what they did not acquire. Nor were they ahead of you in anything. I ask you in the name of God to be merciful to yourself. You are not suffering blindness nor ignorance. The right road is clear and obvious, and the demarcation of religion is standing.

“Othman, remember that the best of the servants of God in the eyes of God is a just imam who is led to the truth and leads to the truth. Thus, he establishes a well-known precept and abolishes an abandoned innovation. The worst of all is an unjust Imam who is erroneous, leading to error. Thus, he abolishes a well-known precept and revives an abandoned innovation.

“I have heard the Messenger of God, saying: ‘An unjust Imam will be brought on the Day of Judgement while he has no helper nor a vindicator. He will be thrown into hell. . . . I warn you of the wrath of God and His smite and chastisement. Certainly His chastisement is painful and severe. I warn you not to be the murdered imam of this nation. It is said that an imam will be killed and his death will open on the nation the door of killing and wars until the Day of Judgement. He will confuse the affairs of the nation and throw the Muslims into divisions, that they will not be able to see the truth because of the height of the falsehood. . . .’”<sup>48</sup>

The words of the Imam did not please the Caliph. A dialogue between the two men took place as follows:

Othman: “Omar appointed and kept in office people like those whom I appointed and kept in office.”

Ali: “Omar appointed such people but he used to tread on their heads. When he knew of any minor violation by any of them, he used to summon him and punish him severely. You are weakened because you are too lenient on your relatives.”

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48. Ibn Al-Atheer, *Al-Kamil*, Part 3, p. 76.

Othman: "They are your relatives also."

Ali: "Yes, they are, but virtue is not in them."

Othman: "Do you not know that Omar appointed Muaweyah and kept him in office for the duration of his reign?"

Ali: "I ask you in the name of God. Do you not know that Muaweyah was afraid of Omar more than Yarfah, Omar's servant?"

Othman: "Yes."

Ali: "Muaweyah makes his decisions without consulting you, then he tells people: 'This is the order of Othman.' You know it and you do not change anything. Nor do you stop him from doing what he is doing."<sup>49</sup>

Thus Ali, unlike any other person, did not take advantage of the difficulties of a Caliph whom he considered to be usurper of his right in leadership. He rose above that and was most protective of him, endeavoring to correct the situation of his adversary because his fate had a bearing on the fate of the whole nation. But Othman considered his advice provocative. He went to the pulpit and delivered a fiery speech threatening the opposition with punishment. He was expected to do only that, so long as Marwan was his chief advisor. Thus the fire of opposition became more inflamed.

## THE CALIPH IS BESIEGED

The messages which were sent by the companions residing in Medinah to people of various provinces brought its expected results. Groups from Egypt, Kufah, and Bassrah came to Medinah asking the Caliph to dismiss his ruling relatives or resign. Otherwise, they were ready to kill him. When the Caliph realized the seriousness of the situation, he came to Ali and asked him to mediate between him and his adversaries.

Ali asked him: "What are your terms for reconciliation?" The Caliph replied: "You are fully authorized to pledge to them whatever you choose. I shall do whatever you propose." Ali reminded him that he spoke to him repeatedly about certain corrective measures and that the Ca-

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49. Ibn Al-Atheer, Al-Kamil, Part 3, p. 76.

liph time after time promised to take those measures. Then the promises remained unfulfilled by the Caliph, who was influenced by Marwan, Muaweyah, Ibn Amir and Abdullah Ibn Saad Ibn Abu Sarh. Othman replied: "I will disobey them and obey you."

Accompanied by thirty men from the Qureshites and the Medinites, the Imam went to meet the Egyptian group. He convinced them not to resort to violence and promised them on behalf of the Caliph to fulfill their demands of dismissing his relatives and changing his policy in handling the public fund. When he went back to the Caliph he advised him to go to the Mosque and pledge publicly to make the reform.

### *Repentance and Retreat*

The Caliph responded positively to the good advice. He went to the pulpit and addressed the congregation, saying:

"I am the first one that should obey God. I ask God to forgive me for what I did. I shall repent to him. A man like me is expected to change and repent. When I come down let your leaders come and make a decision about me. By God if justice reduces me to a slave, I shall do what a slave does, and I shall be as humble as a slave. There is no escape from the anger of God but through Him. By God, I shall give you the satisfaction and I will keep Marwan and my relatives away from me. I shall not seclude myself from you."<sup>50</sup>

These words moved the audience. They wept until tears moistened their beards, and the Caliph wept, and people hoped for the good.

Marwan was waiting. As soon as Othman came back to his home, Marwan dissuaded him and brought him back to his old hard line. Marwan went out facing the multitude which were waiting for the reform. He reprimanded them and told them ". . . You have come to rob us of the authority which is in our hands. Go away. By God, if you challenge us, you will see what will displease you . . ."

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50. Ibn Al-Atheer, Al-Kamil, Part 3, p. 82.

When Ali knew what happened, he said: "Servants of God, if I sit home he says: 'You let me down in spite of my relationship to you and what I am entitled to of your respect. If I try to help him and a good comes out of my effort, Marwan dissuades him and deceives him. He has become an obedient tool in the hands of Marwan after having been the companion of the Prophet.'" He went to Othman and spoke to him angrily, saying:

"You couldn't satisfy Marwan but by your deviation from your religion and wisdom. You have become like a ridden camel, led by his rider to wherever he pleases. By God, I foresee that he will bring you to danger, but he will not be able to take you out of it. I will not come back to you after this. You have ruined your honor and lost the power of judgement."<sup>51</sup>

Ali ceased to mediate between Othman and the rebels. When Othman was besieged he came to him and told him: "I have the right of brotherhood of Islam, relationship to you and of being a son-in-law of the Prophet. If none of these things existed and we were in pre-Islamic days, it would be shameful to the children of Abd Munaf (the great grandfather of the Hashimites and the Omayyads) to let a man from Tyme (Talhah Ibn Obeidullah) rob us of our authority."

Talhah was strongly supporting the rebels. He helped them and approved their siege of Othman. Probably their invasion of Medina was the result of his communication and instigation.

Ali went to Talhah and found people gathering around him. He asked Talhah: "What are you involving yourself in?" Talhah replied: "It is too late." (He meant that Othman is coming to his end.) Ali went to the treasury and asked that it be opened. When the keys were not found, he broke the door and distributed some of what was in the treasury among people who were gathering around Talhah. They left him, and Othman was pleased with that. Talhah came to Othman and said: "Amir Al-Muminine (Com-

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51. Ibn Al-Atheer, Al-Kamil, Part 3, p. 82.

mander of the Believers), I wanted something and God barred me from it.” Othman replied: “By God, you did not come repenting; you are only defeated. May God hold you accountable for what you did.”<sup>52</sup>

Ibn Al-Atheer reported that Ibn Abbas said: “I came to Othman when he was besieged. (This was before Othman sent Ibn Abbas as a leader of the pilgrims during that year.) He (Othman) held my hand and led me to the door, ordering me to listen to the words of the besiegers. Some of them were saying: ‘What are we waiting for?’ Others said: ‘Let us wait. Probably he will change.’ While we were standing, Talhah came and asked about Ibn Odais (One of the leaders of the Egyptian rebels) Ibn Odais went to Talhah, confiding in him. When Ibn Odais returned, he ordered his followers not to let anyone go into or come out of Othman’s house.

Othman said to Ibn Abbas: “This is the order of Talhah. God, take care of Talhah. He instigated these people against me. By God, I hope that his share of the caliphate will be zero and that his blood will be shed.” Ibn Abbas said: “When I wanted to leave the house they prevented me until Mohammad Ibn Abu Bakr interceded for me.”<sup>53</sup>

As to Al-Zubeir, it is said that he left Medina before Othman was killed. Some historians reported that he was present in Medina when Othman died. Ayesah went on pilgrimage and while in her devotional duty she was urging people to repudiate Othman.

When Othman was besieged, the rebels cut off his water supply. Ali came with a skin of water and spoke to Talhah, saying: “This water has to be allowed to Othman,” then it was allowed. He attempted another time to bring him water and spoke to the rebels, saying: “What you are doing does not resemble the deed of the believers or unbelievers! Cut not this man from his water supply. The Romans and the Persians feed and give water to their prisoners.” But the rebels refused to allow the water in.

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52. Ibn Al-Atheer, *Al-Kamil*, Part 3, p. 84.

53. Ibn Al-Atheer, *Al-Kamil*, Part 3, p. 87.

The siege of the Caliph continued for forty days. The rebels were trying to force him to change his policy or resign. He refused to resign, saying: "I will not take off a shirt which God put on me."

Probably Othman was right in his refusal to resign. But he was wrong in saying that the caliphate was a shirt which God had put on him, for his leadership was not by an appointment from God or His Messenger. The one who put the shirt on him was Abdul-Rahman Ibn Ouf and behind him the Qureshites; or we may say that the Second Caliph was the one who put the shirt on Othman.

It seems that the rebels were not determined to force the Caliph to resign nor were they willing to kill him. All they wanted from him was to change his policy in handling the public funds, dismiss his relative governors and keep Marwan away from him. He promised to do that, but he never fulfilled his promise. Thus, they asked him to resign and he refused. Now some of the rebels resorted to violence.

#### *Muaweyah Let the Caliph Down*

It is amazing that Muaweyah and the rest of the Omayyad governors did not seriously attempt to rescue their relative Caliph. They did not send armies to break the siege around him or to prevent the invaders from killing him. Yet the Caliph asked their help. It is reported that Muaweyah sent an army which came near Medina, but did not enter it while the Caliph was besieged. Muaweyah ordered the commander of the army not to do anything until he received his order. He told him: "Say not that the present sees what the absent does not see. You are the absent and I am the present."

#### *And So the Medinites*

The other thing which can be easily noticed in the recorded events of those days is the absence of any resistance on the part of the Medinites. They neither challenged the invading rebels, nor did they prevent them from killing the Caliph. It seems that the Qureshites from the inhabitants of Medina (with the exception of Omayyads) were not in

sympathy with Othman. They were fed up with the Omayyads and the extreme growth of their influence in the Muslim world. The majority of the Qureshites in Medina were sharing with Ayeshah, Talhah, and Al-Zubier their feelings towards the Caliph.

The majority of the Medinites were displeased with Othman's policy of glorifying the Qureshites and putting the Omayyads, the least religious clan among the Qureshites, on the necks of the Muslims. The natives of Medina evidently did not feel that they owed the Caliph a serious support, because they did not receive what the Qureshites received of his generosity. By their nature, the natives of Medina were more religious than the Qureshites.

Thus, the majority of the inhabitants of Medina let Othman down and did not defend him, though they were much more numerous than the invading rebels.

The Imam Ali was the companion most opposed to the murder of Othman and the most sincere in trying to correct the Caliph's policy. He did not only show his sympathy toward him by word; he tried to defend him by arm. He endangered the lives of his two sons Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein, who were to him more valuable than his two eyes. He sent the two young men to protect Othman and ordered them to stand in arm at his door to prevent the rebels from entering his house.

Finally, the rebels were informed that armies from various cities were on their way to Medina to rescue Othman. Some of the rebels felt that the only solution was to kill the Caliph. Since they could not enter the door, they climbed up to the house from over the wall and killed him while the guards at the door did not know what took place.

Thus, what Ali tried fervently to prevent occurred, and all his efforts to prevent it from happening failed. The murder of the Caliph was an ugly event whose consequences were dangerous to the future of Islam and Muslims. This was not necessary to happen had the Caliph listened to Ali's advice by purging his regime from the wicked officials and purifying the state from corruptions.

Had he listened to Ali's advice by following the policy



of his two predecessors, Abu Bakr and Omar, Othman would not have been killed. But Othman was not in control of the affairs. Marwan, son of the exile of the Prophet, was the actual ruler of the Muslim world and the chief advisor of the Caliph. He was able to steer him in any direction he chose.

However, I doubt that Othman was able, even if he wanted, to dismiss Muaweyah who had become stronger than the Caliph. Suppose that Othman told Muaweyah to leave his post and he refused to do that. Would Othman attempt to force him out of office? And had he enough power to do that?

### OBSERVATION

As we conclude our brief presentation of the events of the days of Othman and his sad end, we ought to remember the following:

The caliphate of Othman and its events have proven that leadership of the Muslim world after the Prophet should have been by selection from the Messenger rather than by election of the companions. He was the only one who was supported by revelation and Divine inspiration. He knew the best qualified for leadership among the members of his house and companions.

The leadership should not have been left to the chances of elections by the Muslims in general or by the companions of the Messenger or by an aristocracy such as that of the Quraish community in particular. Nor should it have been left to the chance of selection by a directly or indirectly elected caliph. Nor should it have been left to the election by members of the Electoral Convention. An election or selection such as this might bring the best or the second best or the worst, to power. This is dangerous for the future of a nation which carries a message to itself and to the world, especially when the nation is still at the beginning of its progress and growth. Such an election is bound to bring some time to power a weak leadership which is unable to carry the message. It may bring at another time a strong leadership that deliberately or inadvertently detours

the nation and the message from their right road which was prescribed by the man of the message.

The incidental success of the first election by companions and first selection by an elected Caliph which brought Abu Bakr and Omar to power, made the Muslims, the historians, and the scholars overlook the destructive failure which was caused by the election of the Third Caliph. The accomplishments of the first two Caliphs have dazzled the eyes of the Muslims. They could not see that the events of Othman's caliphate had given clear evidence that the election is not a safe road for a nation of a reformatory message.

The Muslims have forgotten the obvious fact that the purpose of the Islamic message was not to establish a righteous government for only twelve or thirty years. The purpose of the Heavenly message was rather much higher and longer.

When the Prophet, at Ghadeer Khum, declared the leadership of Ali and the rest of the purified members of his House, he was following only a natural course. This is what is supposed to be done by any head of state when he is about to leave his office.

This would be obviously true when the head of the state is a carrier of an extremely important message upon which the state is founded, and his government is supposed to carry that message to the nations of the world as well as to its own people.

Any deviation that happens to the message by ignorance, weakness or impiety of the leadership may put the whole message in jeopardy. The Holy Prophet was looking at the future through the light of God when he proposed, while on his deathbed, to have for the nation a written directive after which the nation would not go astray.

He foresaw that the Muslims would face after him many faith-testing crises. Therefore, it was highly imperative to select for the nation a truly qualified leader in order to keep that nation on the right road.

It was most unfortunate that Omar, supported by other companions, objected to the Prophet's proposal, accusing

him of hallucinations and saying the Book of God sufficed.

The events of the Electoral Convention which brought Othman to power, and the events which took place during his caliphate and their consequences have revealed the gravity of Omar's error. The Book of God did not prevent him from forming his prejudiced Electoral Convention which deprived Ali of leadership and brought Othman to power. The Book of God did not prevent Othman from committing his classical mistakes, nor did it prevent the Muslims from their violent reaction toward his mismanagement and waging several bloody civil wars after his violent death.

For the Book of God to function and prevent people from taking erroneous direction, it has to be coupled with an efficient and firm leadership, equipped with a profound knowledge of the interpretation of the Book as well as the teaching of the Holy Prophet. Such a leadership makes the Book of God operative and drives people to the Qur'anic path.

This leadership is what the Messenger of God wanted to secure for the nation through his proposed written directive.

This is what the Prophet meant in his declaration on the day of Ghadeer Khum when he told the Muslims that he was leaving to them the two elements which would secure them against deviation from the right road, the Book of God and the members of his House, and that the two will never part with each other.

The objection to the Prophet's proposed written directive cost the nation its political and spiritual unity and inflicted on the nation irreparable damage.

When the companions ignored the Prophet's declaration at Ghadeer Khum and rejected his proposed document, they were motivated by their self-interest.

They were unwilling to give Ali the leadership after the death of the Prophet because they did not want to concede the caliphate to the Hashimites. To allow Ali to succeed the Prophet was to admit, at least implicitly, that his leadership was decreed by God and His Messenger who testified that the members of the House of the Prophet will never

part with the Holy Qur'an. This would keep the leadership in this most honored group. The Meccan companions of various clans were unwilling to give up their ambitions. They wanted to keep the caliphate competitive by giving it to a non-Hashimite Meccan. This should secure its competitiveness and allow companions from various clans to enter the race for leadership, because they are not better than each other.

This theory worked for them for a while. Three companions (Abu Bakr, Omar and Othman) from three Meccan clans alternated on the leadership within thirteen years. The ambitious companions, however, lately woke up during the reign of Othman discovering, to their dismay, that their hopes of reaching the High Office was fading out. They faced what they were trying to avoid.

The Omayyads were about to render the caliphate non-competitive because they had already dominated the Muslim world during the first six years of Othman's reign. They were about to establish a royal dynasty, based not on Holiness and brilliant Islamic record as that of the members of the House of the Prophet, but rather based on power obtained by corruption, usurpation, and domination. Its first expected outcome was to bar any ambitious companions from reaching the High Office. The first casualties of this development would be the dreams of Talhah, Al-Zubeir, Abdul-Rahman and Ayesah.

Motivated by the fear of Omayyads' domination, these ambitious people started their campaign against the Third Caliph. They tried to thwart the dream of establishing a royal dynasty and re-open to the members of the Electoral Convention the Avenue of Leadership.

These ambitious companions were not afraid of Ali, for they believed they could block his way to the caliphate if Othman died. Quraish was against him, and the Qureshites were the king-makers. No one knew this more than Ali who told the Hashimites at the time of the Electoral Convention: "As long as your people (the Qureshites) are obeyed (in what is to be done to you), you will never be given the leadership."

However, the ambitious companions' expectation did not come true. *They did not take in their calculation the fact that Quraish would lose the political control for a short time after the death of Othman, when people other than the Qureshites would be the king-makers.*

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Volume II of *The Brother of the Prophet Mohammad* is in preparation.

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The dates which are mentioned in this bibliography are based on the Islamic Calendar, which started by the departure of the Prophet Mohammad from Mecca to Medina. That departure is called "Hijrah" of the Prophet, which took place in the year 622 A.D.

If the reader wants to convert the dating from Islamic to the Western Calendar, he should take into account the difference of the 622 years before the Hijrah. Furthermore, the lunar year on which the Islamic Calendar is based is only 354 days. Thus, it is 11 days less than a solar year. Each one hundred solar years would be 103 lunar years. A thousand solar years is 1030 lunar years.

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